A THOUSAND YEARS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

SONIA E. HOWE

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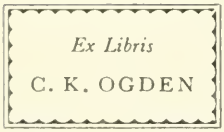

A THOUSAND YEARS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

THE PATRIARCH NIKON AND HIS CLERGY.

(MIDDLE 17TH CENTURY).

Frontispiece

A THOUSAND YEARS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

BY

SONIA E. HOWE

WITH COLOURED FRONTISPIECE, TWELVE PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES, NUMEROUS OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS, AND EIGHT MAPS

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK
TO THE BRIGHT HOPE
OF A CLOSER ALLIANCE BASED ON BETTER
MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN TWO MIGHTY NATIONS
TO BOTH OF WHICH I BELONG—
THE ONE BY BIRTH,
THE OTHER, NO LESS, BY MARRIAGE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THERE are few people in England, probably, who have not read some book or article on Russia, and some aspects of the life of that country are well known to English people; yet it is not too much to say that great ignorance prevails about Russia as a whole.

The thing lacking is a knowledge of history, for history alone explains the present by the past, and offers the right vantage ground from which to view the great drama in action at this time. History alone will explain, for example, why Russia is so irresistibly drawn towards Constantinople, and why so much blood has been shed in vain attempts to gain possession of the "latchkey" to her own front door which the Western Powers have prevented her again and again from getting into her hands.

The ancient story of Oleg the Wise hanging his shield on the gate of Byzantium in 911 is a symbol of Russia's policy.

A knowledge of history will also enable the reader to understand the living bond which exists between Russians and Balkan Slavs, who are all members of the same race and of the same Church, and how this bond has always reasserted itself when the weaker brothers had reason to call upon the stronger for help against Turkish Moslems.

There are also other vital points which have to be explained before Russia's political position can be rightly understood; for the mighty Russian Empire has not been built in a day—from a small beginning and by a number of different processes it has grown to its present dimensions.

For centuries it grew by immigration and colonisation, and it is only since the sixteenth century that expansion has

come by means of conquest. In the course of the ten and a half centuries of her existence, Russia's political centre has shifted three times: from Kiev to Vladimir, from Vladimir to Moscow, and from Moscow to St Petersburg. Each of these four names represents distinct phases of development and periods with very definite characteristics.

This development has not been one of continuous growth: it was interrupted by a great calamity, the Mongol invasion, which darkened the thirteenth century, and from which it has taken centuries to recover. Again, the Russian nation is not a homogeneous whole, a nation of one blood; nor are her peoples all on the same level of culture. Unless these facts are grasped, and the causes underlying the complexity of Russian history come to be understood, there can be no exact comprehension or balanced judgment of her problems and difficulties, and the part she has to play among the nations.

It is because the history of Russia's expansion in the past is *terra incognita* to the average Englishman, that the present political conditions, bringing with them great expectations to Poles and Finns for the future, cannot be rightly appreciated.

The object of this book is to supply in some measure information regarding certain historical and economic facts on matters which puzzle the man in the street; not merely to recount stories, however picturesque.

The aim in *A Thousand Years of Russian History* is to convey general impressions of the various stages passed through by Russia in the course of her evolution, and to give sketches of the lives of those of her rulers who have stamped their era with the mark of their personality.

The title indicates the wide limits of time and fact which have to be brought within the necessary limits of the book. In Chapters XXII. to XXVI. I have given concise monographs of those countries which by annexation or conquest have become an integral part of the Empire, but which cause political and administrative difficulties to the central Government.

The nursery rhyme about "the old woman who lived in a shoe," etc., is an illustration of the Tsar's position; only,

in this case the children want their own shoes, while the "Little Father" prefers to keep them in his.

People of all classes have so frequently asked me for facts and explanations about Russia, that I have been enabled perhaps to realise the points on which knowledge is most needed; and I trust that the information offered to the public will help to disperse the mists of ignorance and prejudice which have too long enveloped the vast Russian Empire and its peoples, distorting the proportions of good and evil in its history.

I cannot better express my hope of seeing closer and ever more friendly relations between the two great peoples now so happily allied, than by quoting the reply of Captain Chancellor, the first Englishman who, in 1553, visited Russia, when asked the object of his coming: "That they were Englishmen sent into those costs, from the most excellent King Edward the sixt, having from him in commandement certain things to deliver to their King, and seeking nothing else but his amnetie and friendship, and traffique with his people, whereby they doubted not, but that great commoditie and profit would grow to the subjects of both kingdoms."

The maps have been adapted from Freeman's *Historical Geography* to suit the text. They illustrate the gradual shifting of power from Kiev to Vladimir, from Vladimir to Moscow, and from Moscow to St Petersburg, as well as Russia's territorial expansion in Europe.

The stippling encircling certain parts designates territories which in early days have formed part of the original "Russian Land," and those countries which later on have been joined to the Empire yet without being absorbed into it, such as Poland and Finland.

In case this book should find Russian as well as English readers, I may explain to the former that I have throughout employed the form of proper names which is traditional in England; and as there is no universally accepted rule for spelling Russian names in English, I have transliterated them as simply as possible.

I embrace this opportunity to express my very grateful thanks to those English friends who have so kindly helped

me by reading my MS. and printer's proof and by tracing maps and illustrations.

I should like also to express my indebtedness to a Russian friend for kindly showing me short-cuts to knowledge by guiding me to the right sources of information, and for verifying my facts.

SONIA E. HOWE.

St Luke's Vicarage, Finchley,
5th May 1915.

SOUTH-WESTERN RUSSIA.

I. PERIOD: KIEV.

Town Provinces:—Novgorod, Pskov, Kiev, Smolensk, Polotsk.

Republics.

Chapter II.

Rurik: builds Ladoga: first Ruler, **862.**

Oleg (879–912): first to make **KIEV** the capital, 882.

Vladimir (980–1015): introduces Christianity.

Yaroslav (1015–1054): first Law-giver.

Vladimir Monomach (1113–1128): last Ruler of undivided Russia.

Period of Appanages.

Kiev loses the supremacy, 1157: is attacked in 1169 by Andrei Bogolyubski.

Kiev destroyed by Mongols, 1240.

Kiev taken by Gedemin of Lithuania, 1320.

Little Russia under Lithuanian rule.

Ecclesiastical Influence from Byzantium: the Church under PATRIARCH OF BYZANTIUM: METROPOLITAN OF KIEV, 1062:

Novgorod conquered by Muscovy, 1471–1495.

Pskov conquered by Muscovy, 1510.

Kiev comes under Polish rule, 1569.

Kiev comes under Muscovite rule, 1667.

Patriarchate of Moscow, 1589. The Great Schism.

Patriarchate abolished: the Holy Synod founded by Peter I., 1721, at **ST PETERSBURG.**

CHART

NORTH-EASTERN RUSSIA.

II. PERIOD: SUZDAL AND VLADIMIR, ETC.

PERIOD OF APPANAGES: *or Minor Principalities: 64 Principalities: 293 Princes: 83 Civil Wars.*

Mongol Invasion, 1238.

THE MONGOL YOKE, 1240–1480. (Chapter III.)

	Chapter
Yuri Vladimirovitch-Dolgorouki (1155–1157): founds Moscow.	
Andrei Bogolyubski (1157–1174): **VLADIMIR** becomes the capital.	III.
Alexander Nevski (1255–1263): first ***GRAND DUKE of Russia.***	
Dmitri Donskoi (1363–1389): wins great victory over the Tatars.	

III. PERIOD: MUSCOVY.

THE TATARISATION OF RUSSIA.

PERIOD OF DESPOTISM: *Hegemony of Muscovy.*

Ivan III., the Great (1462–1505): first ***RULER of All Russia***: marries Greek Princess: claims to be heir to Byzantine Emperors: doubled-headed eagle: makes **MOSCOW** the capital.	IV.
Vassili III. (1505–1533): *first visit by foreign ambassador* (Austrian).	
Ivan IV., the Terrible (1533–1584): first ***TSAR of All the Russias***: *first Englishman to visit Muscovy*, 1553.	

NEW DYNASTY PERIOD OF TROUBLE: *Usurpers.*

Boris Godounov (1598–1605): introduces serfdom: usurps the throne.	V.
Pseudo-Dmitri (1605–1606): Polish influence paramount.	
Period of anarchy (1606–1612): Russia delivered by Minin and Pojarsky.	

WESTERN INFLUENCE.

NEW DYNASTY PERIOD OF *Romanoff.*

Mikhail Romanoff (1612–1645): first of the new dynasty is elected: his father, the Patriarch Philaret, co-Tsar.	VI.
Alexei Mikhailovitch (1645–1676): Great Schism: *Ukraina* comes to Muscovy.	
Feodor Alexeievitch (1676–1682): Western culture favoured: destroys Rodoslovie of the Boyars.	
Regency of the Tsarevna Sophia (1682–1689): Streltzi Risings.	

IV. PERIOD: THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

THE EUROPEANISATION OF RUSSIA.

GROWTH OF THE EMPIRE.

Peter I., the Great (1689–1725): first ***EMPEROR of Russia***: joins *Baltic Provinces* to Russia: founds the new capital, **ST PETERSBURG.**	VII., VIII.
Catherine I., Regents, Favourites (1725–1741): palace revolutions.	IX.
Elizabeth Petrovna (1741–1762): carries on her father's ideas: Prussian War: last of the dynasty of Romanoff.	

New Dynasty: Holstein-Gottorp.

Peter III. (1762): first of the dynasty of Holstein-Gottorp, grandson of Peter I.: is murdered.	X.
Catherine II., the Great (1762–1796): wars against Turkey: partition of *Poland*: annexed *Crimea.*	XI., XII
Paul I. (1796–1801): reverses all his mother has done: *Georgia* comes to Russia: is murdered.	XIII.
Alexander I. (1801–1825): Napoleonic War: regeneration of Russia: Holy Alliance: reaction: *Finland* comes to Russia.	XIV., XV.
Nicholas I. (1825–1855): Decembrist conspiracy: Polish revolution: campaigns: conquest of *Caucasus*: Crimean War.	XVI., XVII., XVIII.
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A THOUSAND YEARS OF RUSSIAN HISTORY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THE UNVEILING OF RUSSIA

THE ignorance of English people as regards Russia is no modern peculiarity, but now, in the light of the present-day opportunities, it is less justifiable.

It can hardly be expected of a nation like the English, which has always had free intercourse with the outer world, that it should realise the possibility and extent of such an isolation as Russia suffered from during the thirteenth to the sixteenth century while under the Tatar yoke.

ST GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.
(Silver coin, 10th century.)

For a nation whose political development has been normal and continuous, it is difficult fully to appreciate the effects on Russia of such a calamity as the Mongol invasion, which completely cut her off from Western Europe.

When in 1375 a map of Europe was made for the King of France, Kiev was not even marked on it, only Riga, Cracow, Lemberg, and the town of Bolgary on the Volga; the remainder was a blank on which was printed the one word "Russia," and this in spite of the fact that in very early days there had been frequent inter-

course between that country and the north-west of Europe, for the great trade route to Byzantium passed through south-western Russia. When, however, in 1459 a map was made for Venice, the original of which is still in the archives of that town, Moscow appeared on it.

So far as England was concerned, Russia was re-discovered in 1553 by "The Mystery, Company, and Fellowship of Merchants and Adventurers for the discovery of unknown lands," which sent an expedition to the Far North, with the object of finding a north-eastern route to China and India.

Three ships left London under the command of Sir Hugh Willoughby, but being unprovided with the necessaries for an Arctic expedition the gallant explorers succumbed to frost, hunger, and disease on the inhospitable shores of Russia. Fortunately, the crew of the third ship escaped these dangers, but instead of finding a passage to China its captain, Richard Chancellor, accidentally discovered Russia. The friendly inhabitants of the place, where thirty years later the town of Archangel was founded, informed the astonished Englishmen that the land was called "Russia," and that it was ruled over by the Grand Duke of Muscovy.

True to the British instinct not to let a chance for commerce or colonisation go by, the undaunted explorers went on to Moscow, which they described afterwards as equal in size to London, but they added that its wooden houses could not be compared with those of the English capital. The enterprising Englishmen did not lose an opportunity for entering into business relations with this newly discovered State. Captain Chancellor presented to the Tsar a document which, in the same vague manner as an English passport of to-day, recommended the traveller to the kindly favour of foreign Governments.

From that date, 1553, began English trade and intercourse with Russia, about which many books were written. In 1558 Russia was visited by Jenkinson, the tourist *par excellence* of those days, who crossed Russia and entered Persia to find a new route to India, and who on his return journey was commissioned by the Tsar to convey a special message to Queen Elizabeth, "that the Queen's Majestie and he

might be to all their enemies joined as one, and that England and Russland might be in all manners as one."

A century later, Milton's *Brief History of Moscovia and of other less known Countries lying eastward of Russia* proved that even in his day Russia was still an unknown country and quite outside the sphere of European interests. The European States simply did not trouble themselves about her : she was ignored or looked upon as alien and unattractive. She was considered hardly fit to participate in political transactions, and no Power desired her as an ally. From neither a military nor a diplomatic point of view was there anything to gain. Russia was useful merely on account of her products—chiefly grain—or as a market for other nations' wares, or else as an overland route to China and India. Even Turkey was far better known than Russia, for she represented a perpetual menace to Europe, while Muscovy was only described in historical treatises or in grotesque anecdotes. Later on she became of interest for the student of ethnography or of language.

As late as the seventeenth century a Russian diplomatic agent who was trying to get French doctors for Russia complained that France thought Russia to be at the other end of the world, with India as its next-door neighbour. What a prophetic vision !

But, on the other hand, Russia was equally ignorant about Western Europe ; it was as if she lived behind the Great Wall of China. Nor did she show any desire to come into vital touch with the rest of Europe ; cut off from the West, her face was turned to the East, and the great historical events which stirred, uplifted, or convulsed Europe were ignored by her.

The Shah of Persia was a personage of importance to whom in the year 1663 presents worth 100,000 and even 200,000 roubles were sent, while the goodwill of the Emperor of Austria was not considered worth more than 1000 roubles. The Oriental despotism, as personified in the Sultan and in the Shah of Persia, greatly impressed the Tsar, while Ivan the Terrible's estimate of Queen Elizabeth was very low when he wrote to her : " We had thought that thou wert a ruler,

possessing great power, and that thou didst uphold the honour of thy position, but *now* we understand that in thy State other people rule independently of thee, and what class of people? Just common merchants!"

As to the King of Sweden, the Tsar wrote to him that "As the heaven is high above the earth, so much higher am I than thou."

Russia's uncompromising attitude of aloofness towards all things Western is amusingly illustrated by the opposition evinced by a Russian when, at the instigation of Holland, a postal service was introduced in 1663. He writes: "The foreigners have made a hole into our country and through it they pry into all our concerns. The post may bring financial benefit to the Tsar, but for the country it is bad. Whatever happens to us, the foreigners know it at once. I suggest that this hole be quickly and securely closed up; also that all travellers should be carefully examined on leaving the country, lest they should carry away important information."

Her political isolation was very convenient to some of Russia's neighbours; it was to their interest to keep her on a low level of culture, and, geographically, Poland, Lithuania, and the Baltic provinces formed a barrier between Russia and the other nations.

Until 1686 no Russians were permitted to pass through Poland; therefore Archangel was the only outlet, which made foreign travel an arduous and dangerous task. To reach Italy 7000 miles had to be traversed—that is, a distance equal to that between Lisbon and the Great Wall of China. About the middle of the sixteenth century, however, the Tsar Ivan IV. decided to bring into his country foreigners—professional men, mechanics, and artisans from Germany; but, unfortunately his scheme was frustrated and the men prevented from reaching his dominions. Some of the Western Powers began to realise the danger of a civilised Russia, and put obstacles in the way of her procuring the necessary means for economic progress. The Emperor of Germany, Maximilian I., wrote early in the sixteenth century to the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights who ruled over Prussia: "Russia's vastness is a danger to us."

That Russia might really awake one day and take her place as a great Power was deemed hardly possible; yet there lurked an uncomfortable feeling in the consciousness of her neighbours that should Russia once begin to learn from Western Europe she might become a dangerous factor in European politics.

It was only as a military Power which could be usefully employed against Turkey that Russia gradually became of importance to those of her Western neighbours who suffered from the wars and invasions of the Moslem Power. In a letter sent to the Tsar by the Patriarch of Constantinople these words occur: "Russia slumbers while everyone else is in arms against Antichrist. All the pious Christians, Bulgars, Moldavians, and Wallachs are awaiting thy help. Sleep no longer; arise and deliver us!"

Design of a Cross in the Cathedral of St Sophia in Kiev. (First half of the 11th century.)

In 1676 a Venetian diplomatist calls attention to the fact that the Sultan had every reason to fear the Tsar of Muscovy, as the inhabitants of Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, and Morea were of the same faith as the Russians, and might at any moment be ready to throw off the Turkish yoke and go over to the Russian Tsar.

The orthodox Slavs of the Balkans did send a cry for help to the orthodox Russians, but in those days Russia was unable either as a military Power or by diplomacy to fulfil their expectations. Yet ten years later the siege of Vienna by the Turks caused the allied Powers—the Pope, the Emperor of Germany, the King of Poland, and the Republic of Venice—to invite all other potentates, "especially the two Tsars of Moscow," to join this Christian coalition against the Moslems.

In certain quarters the hope was expressed "that Russia would pit her unexhausted strength against the Crescent and deliver Europe from the 'terrible Turk.'" Russia was unable to accomplish this in the eighteenth

century, but it is not improbable that she will succeed in the twentieth.

One of the Tsars mentioned in this official *communiqué* was Peter (afterwards "The Great"), who a few years later broke asunder the shackles which had held Russia in bondage.

He first, however, went to learn from the West how to prepare the tools for this liberation—how to utilise and improve the lumbering machinery which his predecessors had gradually built up and accumulated. When he founded his capital on the Neva, he not only "opened a window towards the West," but broke down the wall which had so long separated his country from the rest of Europe; and suddenly Western Europe came to realise that Russia had awakened, that the weak principality of Muscovy had entered the arena of history as a strong monarchy, claiming equality with the rest of the European Powers and the right to make her voice heard in the din of European politics.

CHAPTER II

FROM RURIK TO ANDREI BOGOLYUBSKI; OR, KIEV AND SUZDAL

(862–1157)

To the sympathetic Englishman whose knowledge of history is limited, there is always a puzzling incongruity between the backwardness of the Russian Government and the progressive attitude of individual Russians.

That Russia has been behind the other great Powers in very many matters of political and administrative importance cannot be disputed, but the study of Russian history offers a very simple solution to this problem.

No one will deny the fact that it is impossible to understand rightly the development of England without taking into consideration the Latin colonisation and the introduction of Christianity from Rome. That England came at so early a date into touch with the very centre of European culture, and that her religious life was influenced by the Western Church, had as far-reaching results as had, at a later date, the mixing of races and the introduction of another civilisation. Nor can the consequences of the Norman Conquest be overlooked—the blending of various nationalities, each of which contributed its own genius and thus produced the English nation.

It is quite as impossible to understand Russia and to value rightly the place she occupies in the scale of civilisation without first apprehending the fact that Byzantium and not Rome was the first foreign Power to influence her materially, and that civilisation reached the eastern Slavs from the near East and not from the West. And secondly, it is imperative

to realise fully the vital importance of the Mongol invasion, with its destructive, arresting, and retarding influence on the country's progress and civilisation.

If it is England's geographical position as an island which has caused her to become a world empire by means of oversea colonisation, it is just as much the geographical position of Russia which has forced her to expand by means of extension, by penetration into and by the absorption of those lesser States which stood in the way of her irresistible progress towards natural boundaries—towards the sea and the mountains, or until she comes up against racial frontiers.

If Russia has for so long been an unknown land, and if her history has for centuries been independent of that of other nations, it is again due to her geographical position. Her isolation seems natural enough when one realises that impenetrable primeval forests and immense stretches of marshland separated her from her Western neighbours: that, scattered all over those vast lands which now form European Russia, tribes of Slavs founded their first settlements.

From earliest days a settled mode of living was characteristic of the Slavs. In this they differed from their neighbours, the nomadic Petchenegs, Polovtsi, etc., who roamed over the Steppes east of the Dnieper. These eastern Slavs, eastern in contrast to the southern Slavs (Serbs, Slovacs, etc.) and to the western (Prussians, Wends, etc.), gradually intermarried with the nomads, even though perpetually at war with them.

The French authority on Russia, Leroy-Beaulieu, contends that of all Indo-European people the Russians are the least Aryan, and that this is due to the admixture of Turkish and Finnish elements. Though this may be true ethnographically, the Slavs, in spite of intermarriage with these semi-Oriental tribes, became a separate and distinct people—the Russians. They absorbed into themelves these tribes of other races, but were never absorbed by them. The most dominant and virile tribe of the eastern Slavs was that of the warrior-like Polyans, who settled on the land

west of the Dnieper, where the forest-land ended and the Steppes began.

Wherever the Slavs settled they lived in clans or communities, which in course of time developed into cities. These always retained their primitive democratic basis, and later on developed into republics. Novgorod and Kiev were founded on this principle. Through these two cities,

Russia in the Ninth Century.

Scandinavian and Norman merchants and warriors passed on their way south, more especially in travelling to Byzantium.

Tradition records that the Russians sent a message to the Varangians, whom they had come to know when the latter passed from the North to Byzantium : "Come, rule over us, for our country is vast and without any order in it," but it is much more likely that they either made a virtue of necessity or that these peaceable cities were forced to adopt military chiefs as protectors against external foes.

In 851 Askold and Dir, two bold Scandinavian warriors, had made themselves masters of Kiev on the Dnieper, whence they made a successful raid on Byzantium. The chief of these Varangians was Rurik, who had settled in 862 on Lake Ladoga, from whence he gradually extended his rule over various cities, chief among them Novgorod. After the death of his two brothers, who had come with him, and who had held sway at Byelo-osero and on the shores of Lake Peipus, all Russia came under the rule of his house, and his descendants were the chiefs of the "town-provinces" of which the "Russian" lands consisted during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries. With their "Drujina," or band of warriors, their comrades-in-arms, these military chiefs protected the cities against the attacks of the nomad hordes, Petchenegs, Polovtsi, and others, with whom they were evidently frequently at variance; and they made military expeditions against Bulgars and Greeks in the name of these cities, never in their own.

The republic of Novgorod was for a long time the principal centre, forming a link between the north-west of Europe and "Russia," which by the twelfth century had come to represent a political unit, the "Russkaya Zemlya" or "Russian Land."

It was Kiev, however, taken from Askold and Dir by Oleg, which gradually gained the ascendancy over all the other "town-provinces," and to which was accorded the name of "mother of Russian towns." Here the first phases of Russian political development were passed through.

Four of the princes of Kiev left their mark on south-western Russia during the first four centuries of Russian history. The first of these was the valorous Oleg, a true hero, of whom the bards sang, whose rule is said to have extended from Ladoga to Kiev, and who became renowned for his expeditions against Byzantium, on the gates of which he is supposed to have hung his shield as a sign of his achievement.

The second was "Sunny" Vladimir (980–1015), whose reign is immortalised in the epics and legends of that heroic time. Having accepted Christianity in 988, Vladimir decided to make it the national religion, and caused all his people to be baptised *en masse* in the rivers. His choice of the

Vladimir, Grand Duke of Kiev, 980-1015,
From an ancient Banner.

Greek form of Christianity was the natural result of trade intercourse with Byzantium. The prince having thus adopted the Eastern form of worship, Kiev became spiritually and intellectually a colony of that great city, and in her turn came to occupy a leading position in Russia as a centre of culture, in addition to exercising political supremacy over other Russian cities.

During the tenth and eleventh centuries the importance of Kiev increased in more than one direction, but it was especially as a trading centre that she attracted merchants, who came from afar to attend the eight fairs held there annually. Greeks, Germans, and Arabs visited her, and in their writings give glowing accounts of her twelve market-places, her numerous churches, her riches and glory.

It was during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise (1015–1054) that Kiev had her " golden age," when she reached the zenith of her power and culture, when her princes attained a higher intellectual level than the Russian princes who lived after the Mongols had ruined her city in 1240, and, with it, her civilisation. It is reported that Yaroslav himself made translations from the Greek, and that one of his sons spoke five languages. Intercourse with other Powers was uninterrupted and normal : Russian princes were mentioned in foreign chronicles as having visited Emperors of Germany at Quedlinburg and Mainz, and once even the Pope at Rome. Intermarriage also brought Kiev into touch with the rest of Europe. Yaroslav's four daughters married respectively the Kings of Poland and Hungary, Prince Harold of Norway, and Henri I. of France, and his grandson, Vladimir Monomach, married Gytha, daughter of Harold, the last Saxon King of England. Under Yaroslav Russian law was codified and the " Russkaya Pravda " compiled, and such interest was taken in literature that a public library even was founded.

It was chiefly by means of the Church that education was introduced and fostered, and monasteries became centres of learning. Various princes also founded secular schools in which the children of the nobles were educated, but always according to Byzantian methods.

This was a period of church-building ; still, one may doubt

the accuracy of a chronicler who states that in the great fire of Kiev in 1071 seven hundred churches were destroyed. The great Cathedral of St Sophia, modelled upon the famous church of Byzantium, stood in Kiev as a symbol of the far-reaching fact that the Greek faith had become an important power in deciding the trend of Russia's spiritual, social, and political development. Some years before Yaroslav died, Kiev escaped destruction at the hands of the fierce Petchenegs who had laid siege to his capital. In honour of this deliverance, the Grand Duke dedicated the day of the victory, November 26th, to his Patron Saint, St George; and about three hundred and fifty years later, Dmitri Donskoi made this warrior-martyr the Patron Saint of Moscow.

The death of Yaroslav inaugurates the dreariest period of Russian history (1054–1238): from it dates the decline of Kiev's supremacy. In accordance with an ancient Slavonic custom, Yaroslav divided his dominions amongst his many sons; but this ill-advised act resulted in the splitting up of Russia into a number of minor principalities. As he to whom Kiev was allotted took precedence of all the other princes, the desire to possess that principality led to continual feuds. Another Slavonic tradition, according to which the ruler was succeeded by the eldest male member of his family, which might be either his son or his brother, gave rise to still further complications.

The last prince of Kiev whose influence was paramount, and who stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries, is Vladimir Monomach (1113–1125), a strong and wise ruler, whose "Po-outchenie" or "instruction" to his sons is an interesting document, giving a vivid impression of his personality, and contributing valuable information as to ideas, conditions, and customs of his day. After his death Kiev ceased to play the leading part among Russian cities.

Dissensions and quarrels among the princes had become the rule: there was no harmony, no cohesion, no solidarity among the descendants of the house of Rurik. Every now and then the idea of securing continuity of government by reforming the system of succession was suggested, but it was never carried into practice.

Russia under the Hegemony of the Principality of Kiev.

I. PERIOD (862–1155)

KIEVITE RUSSIA

RURIK (862–879).

OLEG (879–912) makes Kiev the capital. First expedition against Byzantium.

Igor Rurikovitch (912–945).

Olga, Igor's widow (945–955).

Svyatoslav I. Igorovitch (955–973).

Yaropolk I. Svyatoslavitch (973–980).

VLADIMIR I. SVYATOSLAVITCH (St Vladimir) (980–1015). Baptised 988. Divides his realm between his twelve sons and one nephew.

YAROSLAV I. VLADIMIROVITCH (The Wise) (1015–1054). Divides his realm among six sons and one grandson.

Izyaslav I. Yaroslavitch (1054–1068). Great Prince of Kiev and Novgorod.

Vseslav Vsevolodovitch (1068–1069).

Izyaslav II. Yaroslavitch (1069–1073).

Svyatoslav II. Yaroslavitch (1073–1077).

Vsevolod I. Yaroslavitch (1078–1093). Married to the daughter of Henry IV., Emperor of the Germans.

Svyatopolk II. Izyaslavitch (1093–1113).
VLADIMIR II. VSEVOLODOVITCH (MONOMACH) (1113–1125). Divides his realm between his seven sons.
Mstislav I. Vladimirovitch (1125–1132).
Yaropolk II. Vladimirovitch (1132–1139).
Vsevolod II. Olegovitch (1139–1146).
Igor II. Olegovitch (1146).
Izyaslav II. Mstislavovitch (1146–1154).
Rostislav Mstislavovitch (1154–1155).

CHAPTER III

THE PERIOD OF THE MINOR PRINCIPALITIES OR APPANAGES (1157–1462) AND THE MONGOL DOMINATION

While internal dissensions were thus disintegrating Kievite Russia in the south-west, another Russia was gradually developing in the region of the upper Volga. The vast lands lying to the north-east of the Dnieper were only sparsely populated by Finnish tribes. Love of emigrating and desire for pastures new were potent factors in the development of this new Russia, and in course of time the "Great Russians" as contrasted with the "Little Russians" of the South-west were evolved.

As to the princes who left Kiev to strike out a line for themselves, they were prompted to do so not merely from love of adventure, but more especially from a desire of freeing themselves from the irksome fetters of the democratic traditions of the ancient cities—the rule by "Vetche" or popular council.

They travelled eastward, traversed the forest, and opened up new lands for themselves where they were free to start a different régime from that of the old. In this course they were supported by the Boyars, the descendants of the warriors, who had in earlier days formed the Drujina or warrior band which helped the chief to protect the republican cities. These knights had, in course of time, grown rich by the spoils of war and by trade. Many followed enterprising princes into the new countries, or else, later, accepted their invitation to join them. The princes had also offered land to peasants, and in this way the population of new Russia increased.

In the earliest days of Russian history the lakes of the north-west—Ladoga, Byelo-osero, Peipus, and Ilmen—had played an important part, and then the river Dnieper; it

was now the turn of the Volga to come into prominence. Kiev and Novgorod had become commercial centres owing to their position on the great "Eastern Way," the trade route between the Baltic Sea and the Euxine (Black Sea). Their colonies in the north-east, however, developed perforce into agricultural settlements because the estuaries of all the great rivers which flowed through Russia's immense lands were in possession of her enemies, the Turks and the Tatars. In fact, the greater part of Russia was so shut off from natural maritime outlets, and thus separated from the maritime markets, that from the twelfth to the eighteenth century she could only develop as a purely inland Power.

The princes who had established their rule in the upper Volga region fully realised the importance of the mighty river, which with its tributaries formed a geographical entity, and it was here that new principalities and new towns developed, such as Murom, Ryazan, and Suzdal in the twelfth century, of which Suzdal, with the town of Vladimir as capital, was the most important.

Vladimir was the favourite place of residence of Andrei Bogolyubski, Prince of Suzdal (1157–1174), who was also, by virtue of seniority, Grand Duke of Kiev; he, however, preferred the city in which he had spent his early days. Here he dwelt apart from the strivings and intrigues of his relations, and it was during the uneventful years of quiet passed at Vladimir that the thought of creating a new State on an entirely different basis from that of the old Kievite order matured in his mind. It was to be organised on monarchical and not on republican lines; the supreme authority was to be vested in the prince alone, and not to be shared by the citizens as represented in the Vetche, or council of the people. He argued that the land over which he ruled, having been colonised through his father's enterprise and his own, ought to belong to him, to have and to hold and to leave to whomsoever he pleased. He therefore decided to break away from the old Slavonic conception of the land as an indivisible whole, belonging to the whole community, and to the ruler only by virtue of his official position; it was to be his by occupation and his successors' by hereditary right.

Andrei realised that continuity of rule could never be secured by succession in order of seniority, as was the custom hitherto followed in Kiev, but only by direct inheritance ; consequently he refused to subdivide his territory among his brothers and nephews in the traditional manner. He was supported in his decision by the Boyars and by the Greek Orthodox clergy, who had introduced into Russia the Byzantine conception of rule—that of autocratic authority.

Andrei Bogolyubski's wisdom in thus departing from the old tradition soon become apparent, and Vladimir, his favourite city, began to vie with Kiev in importance. It was his ambition to secure for her the supremacy hitherto accorded to Kiev ; hence his attack on " the ancient mother of Russian towns," his robbery of her sacerdotal treasures, which he transferred to the cathedral and other churches built by him in Vladimir, until his capital rivalled Kiev, the City of Churches. The unique position finally held by Vladimir amongst other towns her prince occupied among his contemporaries. He pursued a deliberate policy of coercing the other principalities into recognising his assumption of authority to accord or refuse recognition of their rulers. During his reign many towns were built: amongst others, Nijni-Novgorod on the Volga, with which he intended to supplant the old city of Novgorod on the Lake Ilmen.

His enterprising policy attracted colonists, and in the end he could say with pride that Suzdal had become a populous principality. It was this very success which confirmed him in his autocratic proclivities : " I have made it—it is mine," was his motto. He is the one strong personality of this period : prudent and far-seeing as an organiser, he did great credit to the monarchical form of government ; possessed of great physical courage, he was valiant in war. But unfortunately he was lacking in self-control. He tried to crush the princes who refused to recognise him as their sovereign lord ; and his arbitrary behaviour towards the Boyars, several of whom he banished, and finally his ill-advised action in having one of them killed, led to his murder by the incensed relatives.

Andrei was the first of a new type of ruler, but it seemed

as if he would also be the last, for his immediate successors relapsed into the old ways, and a period of dissension and bitter feud followed upon his death. Gradually the balance of power became equally divided between the princes of Kiev and those of Suzdal, but by the thirteenth century, Vladimir, which had become a principality, had usurped the position of Kiev, now one of the least important of the principalities.

Russia was weakened by being cut up into minor principalities or appanages. The conception of Russia as a whole and of the integrity of her land was for the moment lost sight of ; patriotism died out and particularism took its place. The rule of these appanage princes was individualistic, each man for himself, personal interest playing a more important rôle than national welfare.

This period presents the sad spectacle of a whole country at variance, rent by intestine strife for some three hundred years. Not only were there feuds among the rulers, between uncles and nephews, but wars between the older towns and the new ones, and bitter strife between class and class, every man's hand being against his neighbour's. During these centuries Russia consisted of sixty-four principalities, over which two hundred and ninety-three princes ruled. The land was divided and subdivided ; it was either given away in grants or bequeathed in legacies. All this tended to break up the greater principalities, to dissipate their power, and to accentuate the individualism of the princes, many of whom were gradually reduced from the position of territorial lords to that of mere landowners.

The chronicler of this distressful period saw in it a struggle between the old and new Russia, and between the old and new conceptions of government with regard to the position of the prince. In Kiev the authority of the prince had rested on the fact that he was first and foremost the guardian of the town-provinces against their external foes ; his rôle was that of the servant of the people, while the princes of the new Russia worked for their own personal aggrandisement. It is to this altered attitude of the ruler that the chronicler attributes the decline of national prosperity ; he writes :

"The men of Novgorod, Smolensk, Kiev, Polotsk, and all the other chief towns of the provinces are wont to assemble themselves to take counsel in their Vetche, and by that which the chief towns decide the lesser towns abide; but here in our chief towns of Rostov and Suzdal the Boyars have attempted to establish their own law rather than fulfil the law of God, saying: 'As it shall please us, so will we do, seeing that Vladimir is our subject town.'"

Three methods of land tenure, common to the new Russia, formed the basis on which the social structure was built. First there were the princely domains, worked for the sole benefit of the prince and his household by slaves—captives of war—and in some cases by free peasants, who paid tithes in produce. Secondly there was leasehold land, let out to individual peasants or peasant communities, who paid rent to the prince or the city which owned the land. In the case of such a city as Novgorod the Great, whose sway extended practically over all northern Russia right up to the White Sea and as far as the Ural Mountains, the whole of the country was simply spoken of as Peasant-land. Last, but not least, there was the Boyar land, which was under private ownership, either lay or clerical. In the early days of colonisation, adventurous and enterprising Boyars had penetrated into the country and made it their own, and so had the Church, whose lands were rich and extensive; but when these regions became principalities, the original colonisers, or their descendants, were still left in possession of the land they had previously acquired.

From the twelfth to the fifteenth century there were only two kinds of free people. The first were the Boyars, or nobility, who, although they stood in a kind of feudal relationship to the prince, were nevertheless not his vassals, but could take service under whomsoever they pleased. It was not until the fifteenth century that the Muscovite Tsars made a definite attempt to introduce vassalage, being supported by the Church, which admonished the Boyars to remain in the service of their territorial prince. The second class of free people were tenants, both rural and urban, who paid rent but were not tied by any contract, and who were therefore free

to move away at any time. In the agreement made with the ruler this was specifically stated in the following terms: "The Boyars and the servitors who dwell among us shall be at liberty to come and go." Thus gradually social conditions were regulated: the aristocracy consisted of Boyars and princely retainers; next in rank came the upper strata of the civic population of the great towns.

There was a great deal of variety and complexity in the judicial and administrative organisation of the various principalities. The old cities had their own firmly established liberties and privileges, while the newer towns became directly dependent on the princes. The appanage system, with its parcelling-out process, ultimately resulted in the impoverishment of many princes, who found it difficult to keep up their establishments, and were thus forced to spend their lives at the court of their more influential relations, the rulers of large principalities. Later on, however, many came to realise the economic value of land, which, if it was to be systematically cultivated, required a settled rural population; and in order to obtain this, the liberty of movement hitherto enjoyed by the peasants was curtailed. Owing to these conditions, land-ownership came to play an important part, not only in the economic, but also in the political development of Russia.

The higher clergy found it to their interest to support the princes of Vladimir, and although Andrei Bogolyubski failed in his attempt to transfer the Metropolitan See from Kiev to his own capital, this was ultimately accomplished some fifty years later.

One of Andrei's successors, Vsevolod III., though Grand Prince of Kiev, chose like him to reside in Vladimir and not in the city of which he was suzerain: he had a strong objection to the independent attitude of the Kievite people, who resented being treated as heirlooms; and while this once famous city was losing its influence and power, Vladimir was gaining in ascendancy. A period of progress and prosperity followed: more churches and monasteries were built, education furthered and spread, the population increased, and colonisation penetrated further east, where the scattered

native tribes, unable to resist the advancing Russians, either withdrew across the Volga or became absorbed by the newcomers.

In the thirteenth century the development of Russia was arrested and her civilisation in the south-west completely extinguished by the pressure brought to bear upon it by the Mongol invasion. Were it not for the recent destruction wrought in Belgium by the German army, it might be difficult to imagine a whole country utterly devastated, cities sacked and burnt, and the surviving population fleeing in terror before the approaching enemy.

What Germany has done to Belgium in 1914, the hordes of Ghenghiz Khan, Emperor of Moguls and Tatars, did to Russia in the thirteenth century. It was said that he destroyed five million human beings on his march through Asia. His army consisted of barbaric shepherd warriors, who, under the leadership of his son, Juji Khan, invaded Russia and destroyed many cities, thus conquering the Caucasus. Like a spring tide the Tatar hordes flowed over Russia. The Russians first fought in 1238 with these barbarians near Lake Azov, whence the great wave of invasion receded. The terror-stricken people asked in utter amazement, "Whence came these terrible strangers and whither have they gone? God only knows—and those who can read books." But all even the erudite knew was that the Mongols came from the Amur, conquered China, and overran Persia, Bokhara, and Samarkand.

Two years after the first invasion they returned and penetrated as far as the Dnieper. Then followed a lull of thirteen years until once again, like a hurricane, the Mongol hordes swept over Russia.

The first invasion may have been merely a predatory expedition, but the second was destined to result in complete conquest. Terror and devastation followed in the wake of the invading hordes: ravaged cities, tortured people, skulls and skeletons, marked their passage through the land. Nothing could withstand their huge army, mounted on horses and camels; before their irresistible battering-rams towns fell after only a few days' resistance—some even at once.

Fourteen cities were thus destroyed on the westward route. The great Khan had allowed himself eighteen years for the conquest of all Europe, but at the battle of Liegnitz in 1271 his armies were beaten and the tide of conquest stemmed, Poland acting as a breakwater for Western Europe which was thus saved all the misery, desolation, and degradation which Russia had to endure for the next two centuries.

There were various reasons, internal as well as external, to account for Russia's falling a prey to the Mongols. To begin with, from the ninth to the thirteenth century Kievite Russia suffered from the close proximity of the Asiatic tribes who swarmed over the vast steppes east of the Dnieper. Vladimir Monomach (1114–1125) mentions in his last will that he had made peace nineteen times with the princes of the Polovtsi, one of these tribes. The Christian Russians did not often attack them—when they did, the war was of the nature of a crusade—usually they had to be on the defensive. At times, however, the Russian princes even used them as allies against their own kith and kin. Perpetual feuds existed between the various descendants of Rurik, and, although occasionally some individual prince suggested combining against the invaders, such advice was never followed. This lack of unity in resisting the onslaught of the Mongol hordes proved the undoing of Russia. Calls for help from endangered princes were not heeded by the others, and gradually, one by one, the Russian principalities were either devastated like Kiev or else became tributary to the Mongol Khans.

Added to this lack of unity and cohesion, there was the isolation in which Russia found herself. She had not kept pace with Occidental nations built on the Roman model and under Roman influence; also the level of Russian civilisation was lower than that of her Western neighbours, from whom she was separated by tracts of impenetrable forests or marshland.

Consequently, when the great catastrophe happened, inward dissension and political isolation caused Russia to succumb, and she became simply a vassal of the Mongol ruler.

The European States took no notice of the terrible calamity which befell her in the thirteenth century. Only the Popes of Rome occasionally showed some interest—perhaps less from a genuine wish to rescue a Christian State from Moslem rule, than from a desire to spread Roman Catholicism.

In 1240 Kiev, the "mother of Russian towns," was utterly destroyed, and for fifty years history is silent con-

Russia during the Period of the Minor Principalities.

cerning the fate of this once famous city. Novgorod escaped the Tatar invasion, but a few years later she too had to pay tribute to the Mongol Khan. Having subdued and ruined certain parts of Russia, and having made other parts tributary, the Khan Batu returned eastwards as far as the Volga, where he founded his capital, Sarai, from which city the Golden Horde, as this new power called itself, managed the affairs of Russia.

After the destruction of Kiev this unhappy principality

was totally cut off from the west of Europe and its civilising influences, and the corrupting influences of the Orient began to permeate every sphere of life. All that had been built up during past centuries was destroyed, and under the iron yoke of the Oriental Power progress was arrested and further development retarded.

Russia was almost depopulated by the victorious Khans, and of those who escaped death hundreds and thousands were led away into captivity. Such vast numbers of Russian slaves were sold in all parts of Asia and Turkey that a Russian was scoffingly asked by a Turk "whether there were any people left in Russia?"

During those dreary years of the thirteenth century the strong personality of Alexander Nevski, Prince of Novgorod, and later on also of Moscow (1240–1263), stands out vividly from amongst the nonentities who had been subjugated by the Khan. His memory is still cherished by the nation on account of his success in stemming the tide of an invasion which was threatening Russia on the north and west: on the north by the Swedes, who had extended their dominions to the very shores of Lake Ladoga and to the borders of Novgorod; and on the west by the Teutonic Knights and the Knights of the Sword. The former were conquering the western Slavs and were penetrating eastward, and the latter had already subdued the Livonians on the shores of the Baltic. Alexander Nevski defeated first the Swedes in the battle of the Neva in 1240, and then, two years later, the German Knights, who had taken possession of Pskov, in a battle known as "The Blood Bath on the Ice." These two victories had a far-reaching influence on the history of Russia, one result being that from this time forward the Popes of Rome no longer encouraged the Knights to make crusades against the Greek Orthodox Russians, but, on the contrary, Pope Gregory IX. did his best to win the allegiance of Alexander to the Roman See by making him an offer of secular benefits, which was not accepted.

Although Alexander was so successful against the European foe, he perceived the futility of offering armed resistance to the Asiatic hordes, realising that voluntary

subjection was the only way of escaping annihilation. By this policy he saved the new Russia from the fate which had befallen the Principality of Kiev. Seeing that the Tatars ruthlessly crushed opposition but showed clemency towards those who submitted unconditionally, he aimed at establishing such peaceful relations with the Khan as would secure him recognition. Consequently, when the Khan sent him a message to say that, if he wished to retain possession of his patrimony, he was to appear before him, Alexander wisely obeyed.

The Khan, to whom his fame was not unknown, soon perceived that this Russian prince was in every way, intellectually as well as politically, the superior of his contemporaries. As, however, Alexander's loyalty had not yet been proved, the Khan did not bestow upon him the suzerainty of Vladimir, which at that time held the first place amongst Russian principalities, but gave him instead the ruined Kiev. Two years later, after his second visit to the Khan, Alexander was, however, also accorded the dignity of Grand Duke of Vladimir. His visits to the Golden Horde gave him an insight into the mind and manners of the Mongol conquerors. He felt that the only thing to do was to study their methods and ideals, *i.e.* absolute surrender to the leader, a losing of the individual in the whole, and stoical power of endurance. In all this the Tatars differed from the Russians, whose love of liberty and individualism had degenerated into anarchy, and had thus led to the splitting up of the nation into separate political units. If they wished to maintain their national existence, the Russians obviously had to learn how to adapt themselves to the new conditions, and this they did until the princes became past masters in the art of servility.

The precedent created by Alexander Nevski when he visited the Court at Sarai became established : every senior prince had to appear in person before the Khan in order to obtain recognition, and even then he had to bribe and to curry favour. It seemed as though all pride and manliness had been exterminated for ever ; no one appeared to resent the humiliating dependence upon the Tatar Khan, and his

claim of power over life and death was never even called in question. Among the Russian princes who had to appear before his tribunal, more than one lost his life under the axe of the Tatar executioner. The new Russia of the north-east, split up into a multiplicity of minor principalities, proved herself excellent material for the process of Tatarisation which was begun by the first Khan and carried on too successfully for the next two centuries by later rulers of the Golden Horde.

The Rulers of Muscovy, which had sunk into the position of a mere vassal State of the Mongol Empire, gradually raised themselves to a supremacy over the other Russian princes, making use of the feuds and the corresponding loss of power entailed by the appanage system. That such a situation was possible is explained by the fact that the Muscovite princes were specially favoured by the Mongol Khans.

Certain of the Rulers of Muscovy, whose aim it had been to consolidate disunited Russia under one central power—their own—found powerful supporters in the High Ecclesiastics. Owing to their greater culture, and also to the fact that in those days Russians of noble birth became priests, the influence of the clergy increased. When in 1326 the Metropolitan eventually transferred his See from Vladimir to Moscow, the interests of the State and the Church became identical. Muscovite princes and Metropolitans co-operated in their efforts to create internal order out of the prevailing anarchy due to the system of appanages, and to mitigate the evils which arose from the Tatar domination.

Strange to say, although Russia was treated as a Tatar province, the invaders did not in any way interfere with the religious life of its people. The Khan even favoured the Church, granting it many privileges; monasteries were exempted from taxation, and consequently flourished—indeed, many Russians became monks in order to avoid financial pressure. The clergy enjoyed special protection; to attack or rob a priest, or even to use abusive language to him, was declared a capital offence. Some high ecclesiastics were held in great esteem among the Golden Horde, and

were at times able to intercede for their flocks and to mitigate their sufferings. In this course, tolerance was blended with indifference, an attitude kept up later, even after the Tatars had become Mohammedans. Christians might live in the close *entourage* of the Khan, carrying on their religious life freely. There is a faint suspicion that policy dictated this benevolent attitude towards the Church as a method of keeping the princes in subjection and promoting a docile attitude, for jealousies and intrigues between State and Church were of advantage to the alien rulers.

Russia thus became merely a province of the great Mongol Empire and under the direct rule of the Khan whose administration was a strange admixture of political calculation and financial organisation. Side by side with destruction, robbery, and spoil there was a well-regulated system of taxation with all its network of agents. The worst phases of this rule were during the second half of the thirteenth century and during the fourteenth, when the people suffered terribly from the exactions of ruthless and barbaric tax-collectors. If unable to pay the taxes, which were levied in kind on the products of the country (especially furs), the people were made slaves.

At last, after many risings against the cruel oppressor, a new system was introduced. The taxes were farmed out to the Russian princes, who thus received a recognised position and also came into direct administrative relation with the Khans; although, as intermediaries between the supreme ruler at Sarai and the populace, the princes were occasionally able to stay the hand of the Khan, and thus to relieve the misery of their people.

There is a great difference in character between the princes of the old Russia in the south-west and those in the north-east of the new Russia: while the former, chivalrous and courteous, joyous and adventurous, were certainly more attractive personalities from the human point of view, the latter, cool and calculating, were decidedly greater statesmen, consistent in carrying through a mapped-out policy which aimed at a more independent, more autocratic rule. If the great princes of the early Kievite period were knights,

those of Suzdal and Moscow were business men with eminent financial capacity, who made profit out of the feuds of their rivals, and who quietly annexed lands or bought up the territories of impecunious princes. They are known to Russian history as "collectors," and it was by means of this very "collecting" that their power and possessions increased to such an extent. They also enriched themselves by collecting even as much as double the amount of taxes due to the Khan in order to feather their own nests. The most noted of these princes was Ivan, nicknamed "Kalita" or "Purse" (1328–1340), a ruler notorious for his greed and utter lack of principle.

It is impossible for a foreign Power, such as the Tatars, to rule over a country for centuries without leaving a deep impression on the life and conditions of the subject race, and the corrupt rule of the Mongols has unfortunately left an indelible mark on Russia. The Muscovite princes learned their lesson only too well in that Eastern school: morality sank to a low level, and the brutality, administrative corruption, spying in vogue amongst their Oriental masters were faithfully copied by the Russian princes, who, forced to cringe before the Khans, made their own people in their turn cringe before them.

Perhaps the most typical example of this degrading dependence on the part of the Muscovite princes is Simeon the Proud (1340–1353), who travelled five times to Sarai, each time returning laden with rich presents. Bribery became the acknowledged means of gaining recognition; those princes who were most subservient to the Golden Horde, and who knew best how to curry favour, increased in power over their rivals. Intercourse with the Golden Horde became so intimate that there were even cases of intermarriage. Some few princes, it is true, resented this humiliation, but they were helpless against their oppressors. They were always at variance with one another, and, worst of all, actually employed Tatars as soldiers when fighting each other. The chronicles tell this unhappy tale with painful monotony: Tatar attacks take place, no organised resistance is offered, jealousy and quarrels between the princes

are rife, the decision as to supremacy among them falls into the hands of the Khans.

Acquiescence in the degrading conditions imposed by the conquerors was utterly demoralising. There was great danger of the Mongol yoke being accepted as inevitable and final. The Russians were not only likely to remain at the low level to which they had sunk, but to sink even deeper.

The Church was helpless to change the moral conditions : the entire life of social Russia had become Tatarised and was full of brutality and licentiousness. The liberty enjoyed by women in former days was transformed into a state of Oriental dependence with all its degradation. Women of the upper classes had to spend their lives in the seclusion of the "terem," the Russian equivalent of the harem, thus being deprived of all opportunities for mental development and healthy intercourse with the opposite sex.

The brutalisation of the common people found its typical expression in the development of the system of servitude and in the inhuman manner in which taxes were collected, causing suffering to the whole nation. In true Oriental fashion, insolvent taxpayers were even subjected to torture, and methods still practised remind one of this evil period of Russian history.

The Mongol domination was perhaps felt least acutely in Muscovy, yet it was here that the first attempts to overthrow it were made, and at last, in the fourteenth century, a prince arose who showed invincible determination to shake off the Tatar yoke. This was Dmitri, the Grand Duke of Muscovy. He realised the advantage which Russia might reap from the weakening and disintegration that were gradually breaking up the Golden Horde in consequence of internal divisions—the whole gigantic empire of the Mongols was crumbling away—and the possibility of independence for Russia thus came within the range of practical politics.

The rivals of Muscovy in the principalities of Ryazan and Tver, whose princes resented the rise and increase of her power, were laying plans to crush her ambitious princes with the aid of the Tatars. Dmitri was aware of this, and when he further heard a rumour of the Khan's intention to exter-

minate Christianity in Russia he realised that for Muscovy it was "now or never." He knew that he could rely upon the assistance of the clergy, who were preaching a crusade against the infidel Tatar, and also upon the support of all the other Russian princes except those of Ryazan and Tver. With these supporters at his back he was able to face the Tatars, and at the battle of the Kulikovo Field on the Don, in 1380, a terrible conflict took place—more terrible, says the chronicler, than any Russia had ever witnessed. The battle line extended for nearly ten miles, and the field was covered with a seething mass of fighting men. When some of the Russians, who had never fought before, fled panic-stricken before their enemies, the Russian cause—the cause of liberty—seemed lost, but help arrived. Just at the moment when things seemed at their worst, some of the picked regiments which had not yet taken part in the fight were sent into action, attacking the pursuing Tatars in the rear. Finding themselves caught in a trap, it was then the turn of the Tatars to flee, and after a general rout of the enemy the Russians were able to claim the greatest victory of their history.

Two years later the Khan returned to the attack, and, by means of a ruse, took Moscow, which Dmitri had entrusted to the care of the Metropolitan, who, however, fled at the approach of the enemy. The Tatars entered the Kremlin, killed 24,000 people—in fact, everyone they found,—pillaged and sacked the town, and then withdrew. When Dmitri Donskoi came back he found his ruined city filled with corpses and not a man left to bury them; but gradually the citizens of Moscow, who had fled at the approach of the enemy, returned. The prince passed a severe judgment on the Metropolitan for his cowardice; he banished him and elected a candidate of his own choice, whom he sent to Byzantium for consecration. This was the first time in Russian history that a prince had assumed the right of interfering in ecclesiastical affairs. Dmitri Donskoi was also the first Grand Duke of Moscow to assume absolute superiority over the other princes.

In order to fill his empty coffers he attacked Novgorod,

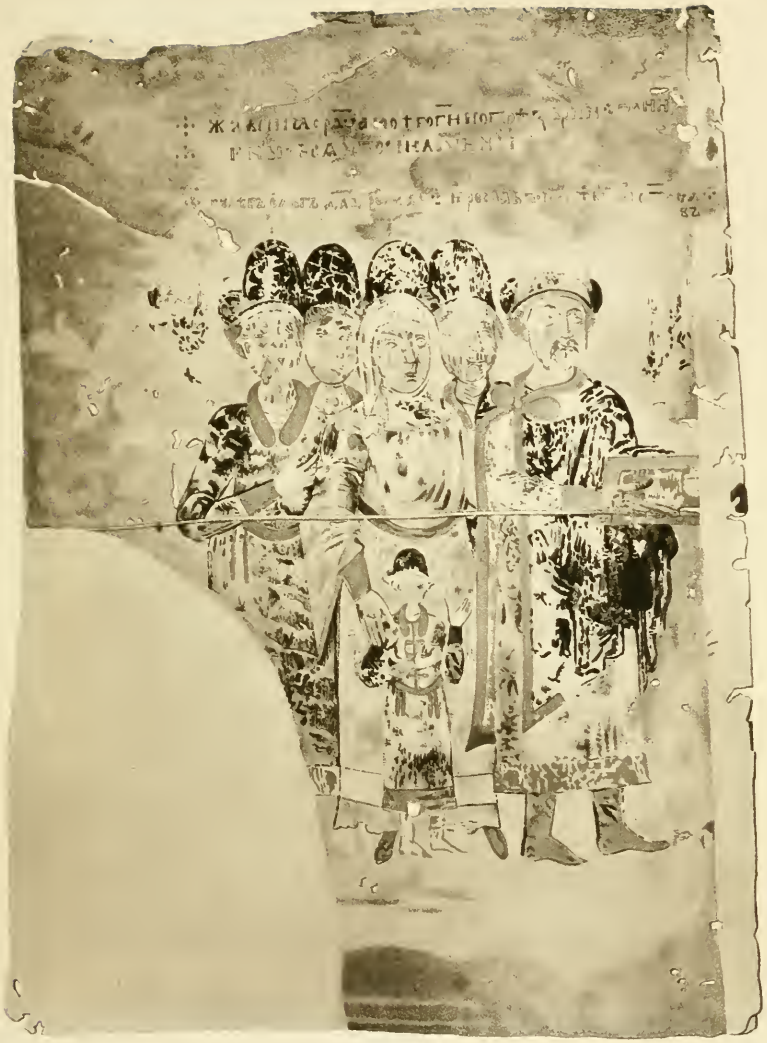
upon which he levied a heavy war-tax, making that proud republic tributary to Moscow. Although he held his own people in awe, and terrorised enemies by aggressive display of power, yet contemporaries recognised and ungrudgingly admitted his political wisdom, which, however, did not avail to change permanently the political conditions. Still, it is from his time—from that great battle on the Don which gave him the name of "Donskoi"—that the Tatar rule began to slacken. Unfortunately, his reign coincided with a period of national calamity, during which ravages by the Tatars, internecine warfare, pestilence and plague, drought and famine, all had their share in depopulating north-eastern Russia.

During the reigns of Dmitri's successors the power of the Muscovite princes increased still more, until, finally, the direct descendants of Alexander Nevski became the recognised heads over all the others, and the centre of their dominion was Moscow, which two and a half centuries earlier had been merely the summer residence of Prince Yuri Dolgorouki, around which he made a wooden enclosure which formed the nucleus of the future great Kremlin. So small and insignificant were the beginnings of Moscow, that the power eventually attained caused amazement in later generations. This wonder and surprise are quaintly expressed in a Russian tale of the seventeenth century which begins: "What man could have thought or divined that Moscow would one day become a kingdom? Or what man could ever have foreseen that Moscow would be accounted an Empire? . . ."

II. PERIOD (1155–1462)

NORTH-EASTERN RUSSIA

YURI VLADIMIROVITCH (1155–1157) of Suzdal.
Kiev loses the supremacy and Vladimir becomes the capital during the reign of
ANDREI YURIEVITCH (BOGOLYUBSKI) (1157–1174).
Mikhail Yurievitch (1174–1176).
Vsevolod III. Yurievitch (1176–1212).
Yuri II. Vsevolodovitch (1212–1216).
(Constantin Vsevolodovitch (1216–1219)).
Yuri Vsevolodovitch (1219–1238).
Yaroslav II. Vsevolodovitch (1238–1246).
(Kiev sacked by Mongols, 1240.) (Vladimir sacked by Mongols, 1238.) Khan of the Golden Horde:
Svyatoslav III. Vsevolodovitch (1246–1248).
Andrei Yaroslavovitch (1248–1255).
ALEXANDER I. YAROSLAVOVITCH, Prince of Novgorod (St Alexander Nevski) (1255–1263). Recognised by Kkan GRAND DUKE OF RUSSIA. Khan bestows upon him the Principality of KIEV and later also of VLADIMIR.
Yaroslav III. Yaroslavovitch (1263–1272).
Vassili Yaroslavovitch (1272–1276).
Dmitri Alexandrovitch (1276–1294).
Andrei II. Alexandrovitch (1294–1304).
Mikhail II. Yaroslavovitch (St Michael) (1304–1319).
Yuri Danilovitch (1319–1322), Prince of Moscow.
Dmitri II. Mikhailovitch (1322–1326).
Alexander Mikhailovitch (1326–1328).
Ivan I. Danilovitch (Kalita) (1328–1340).
Simeon Ivanovitch (The Proud) (1340–1353).
Ivan II. Ivanovitch (1353–1359).
Interregnum (1359–1361): the Khan appoints the great-grandson of Yaroslav the Wise, Dmitri Constantinovitch (1361–1363).
DMITRI IV. IVANOVITCH (Donskoi) (1363–1389).
Vassili I. Dmitrievitch (1389–1425).
Vassili II. Vassilievitch (The Blind) (1425–1462).



Svyatoslav Yaroslavovitch, Grand Duke of Kiev, and his Family.
A copy of the title page of a collection of Manuscripts, A.D. 1073.

CHAPTER IV

THE MUSCOVITE EMPIRE (1462–1598)

A WHOLE century lies between Dmitri Donskoi's victory over the Tatars and Russia's final liberation from their galling yoke. Moscow had become the leading city and Muscovy a sovereign principality. She stood right in the centre of the Russian lands, with a powerful enemy on either side, each claiming authority over one-half of Russia. In the west it was Lithuania, and in the east it was the Tatar. The rule of the Golden Horde was nearing its doom. Tamerlane, with his hordes, swept down to chastise the Khans for their attempts to make themselves independent of the central power in Asia. According to the chronicler, " Tamerlane gave them to the winds of desolation," and, incidentally, the Russians might have shared their fate.

In the year 1380 Tamerlane marched against Moscow, where the uttermost despair prevailed, the Lithuanian army also threatening on the west. However, like Novgorod a century and a half earlier, the city was spared destruction by the Mongols. The believing Russians regarded Tamerlane's sudden decision to return to Asia as a direct answer to prayer. The deliverance was complete ; for the two invading armies of Muscovy's enemies fought each other and Tamerlane was victorious, weakening Lithuania so that she was unable for some time to renew her attacks upon Russia.

Those who suffered most from Tamerlane's invasion were the Tatars of the Golden Horde ; their cities were devastated and they themselves robbed of their dearly bought riches. The empire they had established by means of the sword was now crumbling away. It is true that the Russian

princes still continued for another sixty years to receive recognition of their status as rulers from the Khan at Sarai, but occasional attempts were made to evade the conditions imposed by the Tatar overlord.

In course of time the principle of hereditary succession had come to be firmly established. The hegemony of Muscovy and the sovereignty of her princes were not disputed by the people, and only in a very few instances by the other princes and republics; amongst the princes it was the Ruler of the Tver who stood out longest, and amongst the cities Novgorod and Pskov. Their turn for absorption came in the sixteenth century.

With Ivan III. (1462–1505) a new era of rule was inaugurated—the era of despotism and the rise of autocracy. Clever, calculating, cautious, unscrupulous, hiding his real intentions under a mask of plausibility and legality, he gradually caught all the flies in his web, and succeeded in turning his subjects into slavish dependants. He waged bitter warfare against his rival at Tver, and also against Novgorod and Pskov. Novgorod, the once famous and prosperous city, was devastated and ruined, 27,000 of her inhabitants were killed and three hundred of her leading citizens transported to Moscow and obliged to settle there. Ivan closed the warehouses and offices of the Hanseatic merchants, and put forty-nine of these German merchants into prison, where they were incarcerated for three years, during which time deputations from Germany and Livonia appealed in vain to the Muscovite ruler on their behalf.

This important trading centre—the commercial link with Western Europe—was thus ruined and destroyed, and Muscovy deprived of the valuable commercial asset and the invaluable civilising influence of the city. Novgorod the Great, robbed of her treasures, her splendid buildings destroyed, her inhabitants killed or carried away, sank to the level of an insignificant provincial town, from which she has never again risen.

Ivan's most powerful enemy, however, was Lithuania,[1] under whose jurisdiction Kiev, Smolensk, and other ancient

[1] See Chapter XXV., "Poland."

Russian provinces had developed upon normal lines. These had gained by their union with Lithuania, for Western culture was made accessible to them through Poland, with which kingdom Lithuania had amalgamated, and which stood on the same cultural level as the rest of Western Europe.

After Ivan had, by fair means and foul, gathered into

The Principality of Muscovy.

his own hand all Russian lands, a new political situation arose. So long as Muscovy had been separated by independent Russian principalities from Lithuania, Sweden, and the Baltic provinces, there had been no necessity for diplomatic relations with foreign Powers. For the rest of Europe, Muscovy did not exist; all that was dimly known of her was, that east of Lithuania lay a country ruled over by Tatars, though inhabited by a Slavonic people; and it was not until the time of Ivan III. that an Austrian embassy—which,

however, came to naught—was sent to Russia to arrange a marriage between the Emperor's nephew and a daughter of the Tsar.

For political reasons Ivan married one of his daughters to Alexander, Prince of Lithuania, who later on became King of Poland. Ivan's interference on behalf of his daughter, on the plea that the promises made with regard to her liberty of faith were not being fulfilled, caused perpetual friction between him and his son-in-law. There exist pathetic letters from the unhappy Queen of Poland to her father, the Tsar of Muscovy, in which she bitterly complains of his actions and of his unpaternal behaviour. She accuses him of sacrificing her happiness to his ambitions, and pleads with him not to make war against her husband's kingdom. She tells him that all her unhappiness is due to him and not to her husband and his people, and that the whole nation is hating her on account of her father.

Ever ready to find a pretext for making war and for self-aggrandisement, Ivan defeated his son-in-law and took from Lithuania several provinces which had originally formed part of Kievite Russia. When the Polish king sued for peace, Ivan's reply was, that unless Kiev and Smolensk were also handed over, there could be no talk of peace, for his ambition now was to unite under his own rule all the territory ever held in possession by Russian princes. This demand was a characteristic sign of the times : once more there was to be a common Fatherland, and, forgotten though this idea had been during the period of feuds and of subjection to a foreign yoke, it now revived. The wars fought in common against Tatars and Lithuanians had created an atmosphere of brotherhood which had been lacking for centuries.

Ivan's attempt at consolidation led to internal union, and gradually the Tsar came to be invested with a new dignity : he became a national Tsar, and not only by courtesy "Hospodar of all Russias," which title he assumed. When, therefore, the Emperor of Germany offered to bestow upon him the title of King, the Tsar refused with dignity, saying : "We, by the Grace of God, have been Emperor of our land

from the beginning, and do hold our commission from God Himself." The answer was full of significance as proof of the new basis upon which he laid claim to autocratic power.

Ivan's successful reign, the very vastness of his dominions, and his powerful personality attracted Boyars from other principalities, and even before Tver and Ryazan had been officially incorporated into Muscovy their Boyars were already attending the Tsar's Court. Later on, these same Boyars deeply resented the innovations introduced into Moscow by the Tsar's second wife.

After the death of his first wife it was suggested to Ivan by a Greek who lived at his Court, that he should marry Sophia Paleologos, niece and heiress of the last Greek Emperor, who, after the conquest of Byzantium by the Turks in 1453, had lost his crown and had finally taken refuge in Italy. The Princess was then living under the care of a Greek cardinal at Rome. In spite of the fallen fortunes of her house, it was still a desirable match, and therefore the Tsar sent an envoy to Rome, where the matter was satisfactorily arranged. The Princess, who had refused union with a Roman Catholic prince, expressed her willingness to marry the Greek Orthodox Tsar, and with her entry into Moscow a new influence began to make itself felt.

The new Tsaritsa Sophia, a clever, witty, and cultured woman, brought in her train Greeks and Italians, who introduced into Muscovy culture and art, but also their own ways of thinking and acting, and herein lurked a danger which soon became apparent. Not merely did the Byzantine code of etiquette supplant the old Russian customs, but the evils and intrigues of the corrupt Byzantine Court life found entrance. The Boyars resented these innovations, and objected to the new class of courtiers at the Muscovite Court.

The Tsaritsa's personal influence, however, was not pernicious, and she supported her husband in all his ambitions, instigating him to cast off the humiliating Tatar yoke. She, the Imperial Princess, objected to her husband's position as vassal to the Khan. Heiress to the Byzantine Empire, she cherished an ambition to elevate her husband to her own

exalted position, and it was she who made him put in a claim as heir to the Greek throne. Ivan III. was the first to make use, occasionally, of the title of Tsar, the Slavonic form of Cæsar, and to make the Byzantine emblem of the double-headed eagle his Imperial crest. This assumption of being the sole representative of the Byzantine Empire carried with it the claim to be the head of all Greek Orthodox believers. All this added to the power and dignity of the Tsar, who never lost sight of his aim to become an autocratic ruler in the twofold sense of unlimited power over his own subjects and complete independence of all foreign Powers.

After the Khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, and the Crimea had broken away from their allegiance to the Golden Horde, the Muscovite princes began seriously to consider the possibility of gaining their liberty. If independent Tatar States could come into existence, why not independent Muscovy ?

During the reign of Ivan III. (1462–1505) specially energetic measures were taken to throw off the galling Mongol yoke ; but this end was not finally achieved until 1480, when an event happened which is probably unique in history : two contending forces—Russian and Tatar—which had been lying in wait for each other for weeks on opposite sides of a river, were simultaneously stricken with panic and fled without striking a blow ; and from that date Russia was free and Muscovy an independent and sovereign State. Ivan's Asiatic despotism, however, not only struck terror into the hearts of his dependants, but prevented foreigners from coming into Russia ; thus the urgently required leaven of Western civilisation and commercial enterprise was artificially excluded.

The Tsar's arbitrary conduct created a fatal precedent, and influenced for centuries the Russian attitude towards Imperial power ; instead of a sane and wholesome respect for the Government as the lawful authority, a morbid, slavish fear of power *as such* became the rule. His arbitrary behaviour and fickleness showed itself in the frequent changes he made with regard to the succession, which had become a very acute question. His eldest son had died and Ivan's grandson was the rightful heir ; his second wife, however, intrigued to secure

the crown for her own son. When remonstrated with by the Boyars for his treatment of his grandson, whom he alternately appointed joint ruler or flung into prison, according to the family influence which swayed him at the moment, the despot replied : " I will give Russia to whom I think proper." His last will and testament was an important document in which the political privileges of the Tsar as suzerain over all the other Russian princes were clearly defined : for the future all power was to be vested in his hand alone.

Ivan regulated the condition of the peasants, curtailing their rights more and more ; but he introduced a more equitable system of taxation. He also collected the laws and had them codified, he limited the power of the Boyars over their followers, and did his best to change the position of the free and independent Boyars to one of servitude. He tried to settle once for all the vexed question of priority amongst the princes and also amongst the Boyars of Muscovy, whose numbers had been swelled by the influx from other principalities. This he did by reducing all to the same level of complete subservience to himself—service was to be rendered to him alone.

After a long reign of forty-three years this powerful Tsar died. He had achieved his aim, his ambition was fulfilled : Russia was a consolidated nation under a central authority. Muscovy had become the first Power, the other principalities had been absorbed into it, his territory had been greatly enlarged and four million inhabitants had been added to the original population of his realm. He had succeeded in establishing a certain amount of order in the land ; administration and thereby the chances for civilisation had been placed on a firmer basis, but his despotism had reduced the people to a state of abject submission. Politically, Muscovy had gained in dignity, she had been liberated from the Eastern yoke and had proved herself victorious in battle against her Western foes. Ivan's claim to be the heir of the Byzantine Emperors, and thus the sole protector and head of all Orthodox Slavs, enhanced the position of the Tsar in the eyes of the Slavs of the Balkan States. He ruled his people with a rod of iron, and well earned the

name of "Ivan the Severe"; some even called him "Ivan the Great," but this is a title one is loth to accord to a ruler lacking in the quality of moral greatness.

After Ivan III.'s death, his son Vassili, III. (1505–1533), succeeded him, and reigned for twenty-eight uneventful years. What the father had introduced and established, the son carried on: he enlarged his territory by annexing other Russian lands, and showed himself, in the war against Pskov, an important commercial centre, as ruthless as his father, the town being as utterly ruined as Novgorod had been by his predecessor. The people of Muscovy had become so deeply imbued with the spirit of submission to despotic rule that the Austrian Ambassador, who visited Russia at this period, was justified in reporting that for the people "the will of the Tsar is the will of God, and of the will of God the Tsar is the fulfiller."

The glory of having "discovered" Muscovy belongs to Herberstein, the Austrian Ambassador, the "Columbus" of Russia, who had been sent on a mission to the Tsar in regard to the Turkish peril which was threatening Europe. Herberstein, who spoke Slavonic, was able to converse with the Tsar, and his knowledge of the language enabled him to study the Russian chronicles, which revealed to him the past of this hitherto unknown country. On his return to Austria he wrote a book on Russia which was translated into several languages, and supplied Western Europe with much valuable and true, but also at times startling, information about the newly discovered Muscovy.

It is unfortunate for Russia, however, that her first diplomatic relations with a European State should have been entered into at a period when she had become thoroughly Tatarised and brutalised. The Austrian Ambassador's report was not favourable enough to incline any one of the Powers to seek a political alliance with so barbaric a State. In a letter to the Emperor of Germany the King of Poland wrote: "We (the Poles) shall on no account grant the Russians a passage through our country. It is important to prevent their reaching the sea-coast, because the Muscovites, like all barbaric people, think only of loot and devasta-

tion and are always a danger to the Christian nations; but should they find a way to the sea, they will become still more dangerous."

After the death of the Tsar, his widow, the Tsaritsa, was proclaimed Regent for her son Ivan, later on known as "The Terrible" (1533–1588). The administration of the country was to be carried on by the Council of the Boyars; but, as a matter of fact, it was the Tsaritsa's lover who ruled in her name, with such diplomatic skill and discretion that his power and influence increased. She, however, surpassed in cruelty anything that had ever been known before in Moscow, thus earning the name of "Helen the Terrible," and the people spoke of her as "That drinker of blood." She was poisoned by her enemies, while her lover was left to die of starvation in prison.

CAP OF VLADIMIR MONOMACH, WITH WHICH THE TSARS OF RUSSIA HAVE BEEN CROWNED FROM THE TIME OF IVAN THE TERRIBLE.

(According to tradition, this cap was sent in 988 to Vladimir, Grand Duke of Kiev, on the occasion of his marriage to the sister of the Emperor of Byzantium.)

During the next four years of the Tsar's minority, intrigue followed intrigue, and, although the heads of the two opposing factions of Boyars were capable men, the country suffered. Meanwhile the young Tsar was neglected and left to his own devices; he soon realised that as a human being, as a child, he was of no importance, that neither his wishes nor his feelings were ever considered. The leading Boyar, Shuiski, separated him from his beloved nurse and, later on, from his young friend Voronzov, whose rise to power was feared by the ruling Boyars, who was therefore taken prisoner in Ivan's presence, and who, but for the boy Tsar's bitter weeping, would have been killed. Deprived of every lawful outlet, kept like a prisoner by his Boyars, the lad noticed that all they did was done in his name and ostensibly by his authority, and gradually he came to realise that it was in the title of Tsar that the power was vested. Sensitive, nervous, and highly imaginative, he brooded over the contradictions in his position, and decided to become a ruler whom no one would be able to

limit or oppose. All the evil propensities of his nature were given free course.

With adolescence, his untamed, violent, and licentious nature became apparent. Having liberty to do as he liked, he passed his time either in visiting monasteries and shrines or in riotous living with his companions. His alternately religious and licentious life kept the people in terror-stricken suspense, as no one knew what a change of mood might lead to.

Like all other Muscovite princes, Ivan had been taught to read from the psalter and breviaries, but his keen mind did not rest satisfied with the prescribed portions—he began to read the whole Bible and, later on, the Fathers also, and other translations from the Greek, so that for his time he was exceptionally well read. He searched out of the Old Testament the texts dealing with regal power and obedience to authority, till his mind was filled with the vision of himself as the chosen representative of all power.

When seventeen years old, Ivan had himself crowned Tsar. He was the first to assume this title definitely, and from this time on Muscovy was no longer reckoned as a Principality but as a Tsardom. This was the first coronation in Muscovy; the crown used on this occasion was the cap of Ivan's ancestor Vladimir Monomach (1113–1175), the last great personality of Kievite Russia. Tradition, not founded on fact, says that this cap had been sent by the Greek Emperor Constantine Monomachus to his grandson, who was crowned with it by the Metropolitan of Ephesus. It was further reported that the Kievite prince had bequeathed it to his son Yuri Dolgorouki, the founder of Moscow, with instructions that it should not be used until such time as God should send a worthy monarch to Russia.

In order to increase further the authority and status of the dynasty a new genealogy had to be drawn up: it was alleged that Rurik, the first ruler of Russia, had been a direct descendant of a mythical brother of Cæsar Augustus, supposed to have settled in Lithuania. All these unfounded traditions and legends had been collected and were made use of with the sanction of the Metropolitan Makarius, and thus the Church supported and lent colour to the fictitious

claim of the Tsars to be heirs to the supremacy of Imperial Rome.

Just after the coronation of Ivan IV., Moscow was nearly destroyed by a great fire. It was a terrible calamity : seventeen hundred adults alone were burned and the population rendered homeless. Riots became frequent. A rumour was started by enemies of the ruling clique that the relations of the deceased Tsaritsa, the Glinskys, had caused the fire by witchcraft. The exasperated people believed this, and all members, and even dependants, of this family were massacred. Not satisfied with preventing the escape of any of the supposed sorcerers, the infuriated populace marched towards the palace of the Tsar on the Sparrowhills to demand from him the surrender of the Princess Anna Glinsky and her son.

It was a crucial moment in the Tsar's life. Hitherto he had been fully convinced of his own omnipotence, but now he felt himself helpless and unable to face the rioters. Overcome by fear, he accepted the advice of the priest Sylvester, who at that very moment appeared suddenly before Ivan, declaring that the riot was the result of the misery he had caused to his people, and was a judgment of heaven on all his wickedness. Terror-stricken, the Tsar promised to respect and to follow his admonisher in all things.

A few shots from the guards, by Sylvester's order, dispersed the crowd, and the Tsar was relieved from fear. Grateful for his deliverance, he appointed Sylvester to be his spiritual monitor and guide, and this priest, together with Ivan's friend, Adashev, for a time gained complete ascendancy. These new advisers were wise men, who let the Tsar imagine that all the good and constructive work done by them was due to his own initiative, and for a period of nine years Muscovy breathed freely. Ivan's wife also had a good influence over him, as he loved her devotedly, and the depression which had brooded over his earlier years began to pass off.

Sylvester and Adashev, who were truly good and honest statesmen, formed a Council of picked men, chosen not only from amongst the Boyars, but also from amongst the upper strata of the civic population. Occasionally the Council

called upon the whole nation to send up representatives: the Duma thus formed was the first of its kind, being not local, like the ancient Vetche, but imperial.

This Zemsky Sobor, or Territorial Council, and later on also an Ecclesiastical Council, did excellent work. Matters of juridical, administrative, and religious importance were discussed and eventually reorganised; some useful reforms were introduced, and the laws concerning every sphere of domestic and civic life were revised. The tangible results of all this beneficent activity were the compilation of "The Legal Constitution" and "The Hundred Chapters"—a collection of ecclesiastical laws.

Sylvester, who came from Novgorod, where civic life was highly organised, kept the example of that republic in his mind. His "Domostroi," or "Rules for the Household," prove that he was deeply in earnest in his endeavour to draw Russian society out of the morass into which Tatar influence and despotism had drawn it.

Of Adashev, Kourbski, the contemporary historian, wrote: "That it would be impossible adequately to describe him—no one would give credence to such a description; but he could safely say that this man was like an angel among the Tsar's coarse and brutish companions."

The Tsar Ivan's advisers did not limit their activities to domestic affairs: their most important and far-reaching success was the final conquest of the Khanate of Kazan in 1552, which added considerably to Russian territory and to Russian influence over the various tribes of south-eastern Europe. In order to Christianise the new Moslem subjects, and at the same time to extend and confirm Russian influence, churches and monasteries were built and a bishopric was founded at Kazan (1563).

A few years later Astrakhan was also conquered, and thus the entrance to the Caspian was secured, the whole course of the Volga now running through Russian territory.

Sylvester and Adashev realised what an urgent need there was for Russia to come into touch with Western Europe, to learn from foreign nations things of which Russians were ignorant. For this purpose a Saxon named Schlitt was

authorised in 1577 to procure artists, artisans, physicians, chemists, printers, etc., in the Tsar's name. This emissary succeeded in finding one hundred and twenty-three such men willing to take the risk of going into wild and barbaric Muscovy. The plan, however, was frustrated owing to the jealousy of the senators of Lübeck, who, in conjunction with the Livonian Knights, resented the idea of Russian progress. Schlitt was thrown into prison in Lübeck and his band of pioneers of Western culture scattered. But despite all that Germans did to keep Russia isolated, the hour had come for Muscovy to be brought into touch with Europe, and Englishmen were the agents by which this momentous change was brought about.

In 1553, Richard Chancellor, the master of a vessel, the *Edoardo Bonaventura*, bound on a voyage of discovery of a northern passage to China and India, landed on the coast of the White Sea. The natives of these parts, who had never seen a big vessel before, were terror-stricken until the gallant captain succeeded in reassuring them, whereupon they proved themselves most friendly. A message was sent to the Tsar to inform him of the arrival of the strangers. Ivan evinced a keen interest in the travellers, and sent them a cordial invitation to visit him in Moscow, even going so far as to offer to bear the expense of the journey.

Chancellor, however, getting impatient, had set off on his own account, and on the road he met the emissaries of the Tsar, who returned with him to Moscow. He had been furnished by his King, Edward VI., with a letter of recommendation to the ruler of any country he might happen to traverse. The reception afforded him by the Tsar surpassed all his expectations : he was granted not only an interview, but permission to trade with the monarch's subjects. The Englishmen were delighted with the prospect of commercial enterprise opened up before them. They began to look upon Muscovy as a second America, and the " discovery of Russia," with all its possibilities, portended great things for the future. A " Company for trading with Muscovy, Persia, and Northern Lands " was founded. The " Russia Company," as it came to be called, was properly constituted and invested with rights

and privileges ; it was also permitted to buy land annually for a sum not exceeding £60.

In 1555 Captain Chancellor revisited Moscow, but this time as an accredited British envoy : he succeeded in securing a charter for the company, which was also granted the monopoly of all wholesale and retail imports, and permission was given to build British factories at Cholmogori and Vologda. The Tsar even presented the company with a house and land in Moscow, and there, as elsewhere in the factories belonging to the English, they were under their own jurisdiction and exempt from Russian law.

On his return journey Chancellor was accompanied by a Russian envoy. Unfortunately, the gallant Englishman lost his life in a shipwreck off the coast of Scotland, but the Tsar's ambassador was saved and succeeded in reaching London. From this time forward, intercourse was established between England and Russia, and English vessels annually visited the estuary of the river Dvina, where, thirty years after the landing of the *Edoardo Bonaventura*, the town of Archangel was founded as a result of the increasing number of colonists who had settled there. The monopoly obtained by the English traders gave them a very unfair advantage over the Russian merchants, the benefits of the treaties being on the English side. These special privileges were largely due to the influence exercised over the Tsar by Jenkinson, the indefatigable traveller and explorer of Asia. The excellent relations between England and Russia became strained later on, owing to Queen Elizabeth's refusal to enter into an alliance with the Tsar against Sweden, Poland, and Turkey. Another cause of estrangement was Ivan's suggestion that he and the Queen should agree to offer each other an asylum in case of need ; this did not appeal to the Queen at all, although the idea of a refuge in England, away from his truculent Boyars, may have greatly comforted the heart of the Tsar. There was yet another grievance against Elizabeth : he had sued for the hand of Mary Hastings, the Queen's cousin ; but although the young lady may at first have felt flattered at the prospect of becoming Tsaritsa of Russia, later on, when she heard a

detailed description of her wooer's character, she drew back. The Tsar had to console himself elsewhere until he exceeded Henry VIII. by one in the number of his wives.

The whole country gained by the rule of Sylvester, but the Tsar began to be restive under the restrictions imposed upon him. Hitherto his fear of Sylvester and his attachment to Adashev had sufficed to keep these two in their position of authority. The crisis came after a serious illness, during which Ivan commanded the Boyars to swear allegiance to his infant son; but the Boyars refused, preferring to uphold the claim of the Tsar's cousin, as they knew only too well to what endless strife and intrigues a regency would lead.

Ivan did not die, and after his recovery he decided to break away from tutelage. To all appearance he had forgiven the Boyars their refusal, but the moment for freeing himself from all restraint had come. The just but strict rule of Sylvester had caused many of the Boyars to hate him: his enemies succeeded in convincing the Tsar that Sylvester had by sorcery caused the death of his beloved wife, and at their instigation he was cited to appear before an ecclesiastical court. Ever since 1559 there had been an estrangement between the Tsar and his spiritual adviser, who was now fetched from the monastery to which he had withdrawn. The Council found him guilty and condemned him to banishment in the most northern monastery, that of Solovietsk on the White Sea. Sylvester in his fall drew Adashev after him, the latter being put into prison, where he died of fever and thus mercifully escaped a violent death.

Now that the Tsar had shaken off the restraining influence of his advisers, his mental and moral depravity had full play. The psychology of this Tsar is full of subtlety, and a simple verdict of insanity hardly covers his terrible deeds; for underlying all there seems to be the struggle for a principle—for his conception of sovereignty. His notion of the rulership clashed with that of the Boyars, who, according to ancient Russian custom, claimed the right to share the government with him, while he called them slaves and claimed the right to dispense altogether with their co-operation. Finally a political *impasse* was reached, and the Tsar,

unable to evolve a new and modified scheme of government, decided to rid himself once for all of the Boyars.

He left Moscow surreptitiously, pretending to abdicate, and his departure threw the city into a state of confusion. From the village of Alexandrovo he sent two proclamations in which he explained his reasons for "going to reside wherever God would call him," these were the behaviour of the Boyars and the support given to them by the priests. He put the Boyars under his imperial ban, while he assured the merchants and other taxpayers of his goodwill. The various estates sent deputations to the Tsar to plead with him to return; the people offered to hunt down the traitors, and even the Boyars and priests came in person to protest their loyalty.

Finally Ivan IV. agreed to return, but on his own conditions: these were extremely stringent, and gave him the right to banish and put to death any Boyar he chose, and to sequestrate the property for himself. He thus practically instituted a dictatorship. He also established a new Court and created a new class of courtiers. Of the worst of the Boyars, and out of the dregs of society, he formed his band of secret police, the Opritchnina, which scoured the country for traitors. Suspicion of treason was an obsession with Ivan, and thousands of innocent people were sacrificed in consequence—even nuns amongst them. The Tsar personally sent lists of his victims to monasteries, requesting prayers for the repose of their souls, to pay for which he sent sums of money. He kept a diary in which he noted down the names of those whom he killed with his own hand. His mania for giving orders to have people beheaded can only be compared to that of the Queen in *Alice in Wonderland.*

A new system of government was now instituted for a period of seven years, and two Russias existed side by side: one, the Zemstchina, was ruled over by the Council of the Boyars, with the Kremlin as headquarters; the other, the Opritchnina, was under the absolute control of the Tsar, who had taken up his residence in Alexandrovo with his new courtiers and bodyguard, the Opritchniki, who eventually numbered six thousand men.

This division of Russia's territory into the Zemstchina and the Opritchnina was carried out on arbitrary lines, and in one part of Moscow alone twelve thousand officials and citizens were deprived of their property, which was taken over by the creatures of the Tsar, the dispossessed owners being forced to travel on foot to distant parts of the country as colonists.

The life of the new Court was fashioned on monastic lines : the Tsar himself sang in the choir, read the offices in the chapel, and prostrated himself on the stone floor to such an extent that his forehead was covered with bruises. When he had satisfied the religious side of his nature, he plunged into the other extreme—licentiousness and cruelty ; at such times it was his keenest delight to watch the anguish of his tortured victims. The only man who dared to withstand him was the newly elected Metropolitan, Philip, Abbot of the Solovietsk Monastery, whose manly and holy personality stands out all the more brightly on account of the background of flattering, insincere, and self-seeking priests. The Tsar met his master in this high ecclesiastic, a man remarkable for his purity of motive, his uncompromising severity and indomitable courage. But, finally, even this man was crushed by the tyrant ; he was accused of defalcation and of wizardry, false witnesses being easily procured. He was banished to an ecclesiastical penitentiary, where he was left to die of starvation.

The Tsar's love of carnage was illustrated in the way he carried on warfare against Novgorod, Pskov, and the Baltic provinces. But even while this sanguinary conquest was carried out and he was revelling in bloodshed and cruelty, he still found time to occupy himself with foreign politics. Poland specially claimed his attention. After the death of the last of the Jagiellons,[1] a deputation invited Ivan's son to become King of Poland. The Tsar refused to accede to this request, but offered himself instead as candidate for the throne. He told the Poles that all the causes for war would be removed if Poland, Lithuania, and Russia were united with Moscow. So they would, from his point of view ; but the Poles declined this offer with justifiable alacrity.

[1] See Chapter XXV., "Poland."

War broke out in consequence, and matters became especially acute in the reign of the capable and chivalrous Stephan Bathory, who had meanwhile been elected King of Poland, and who had actually suggested a duel between himself and the Tsar as the best means of settling the vexed question. Ivan, however, declined the honour.

Ivan the Terrible found himself at last compelled to request the intervention of the Pope, who readily accepted the rôle of intermediary in the hope of gaining the Tsar's allegiance to the Roman Church. The Papal ambassador, the Jesuit Possevin, visited Moscow, and showed plainly that he had only the interests of Rome at heart, not those of Muscovy or even Poland, although he favoured the latter as a Roman Catholic country. The result of this intervention was the conclusion of a truce for a period of ten years, each party surrendering part of the territories annexed at various times : this meant for Ivan that he had to give up the idea of reaching the Baltic.

The Tsar, absolutely unchecked by any restraining influence, surrendered himself more and more to his orgies of blood, till one day in a fit of ungovernable fury he slew his eldest son with his own hand. This act caused him bitter remorse, and he would have suffered still more had he known that by it he had extinguished his dynasty.

The remaining years of his life were a monotonous repetition of deeds of violence, alternating with pilgrimages to monasteries and shrines. His love for theological argument in his letters to his former friend Kourbski, who had taken refuge in Poland, give an insight into the Tsar's large store of undigested knowledge. They abound in brilliant ideas and clever arguments, interspersed with absolutely absurd statements, the utter lack of balance in his character manifesting itself in his literary effusions.

Although during the last years of his life the Tsar indulged less in wholesale slaughter, the death of this "religious monster," as he has been aptly described, was a real deliverance for Russia. The historian Klyuchevski endeavours to explain the phenomenon of the Tsar's reign by "moral instability." He says that "his alternation of lofty mental

flights with shameful moral degradation helps to throw a light upon Ivan's policy of State. Although he accomplished and designed much that was good, wise, and even great, yet the terrible deeds perpetrated by him have made him an object of horror and aversion, not only to his own but also to subsequent generations."

The net result of Ivan's reign is clear. By his terribly inhuman methods of putting down treason he only created anarchy, for he struck out indiscriminately, like a blind man, in his fury. He succeeded in creating a new aristocracy consisting of military officials and of courtiers who were of his own making; and thus beside the old noble families, whose genealogies dated back to the early days of Russian history, a new class of aristocrats developed. In spite of his declared hatred of the Boyars, he could not dispense with them; hence the dual rule of Russia during this period of history.

The beneficent reforms of Sylvester and Adashev are reckoned as righteousness to Ivan, and also their far-seeing policy of colonisation, which was furthered by every means—even by compulsion.

The conquest of the whole of the Volga region and of Siberia (by the Cossack Yermack) had brought vast territories under Russian rule, and this gave the Tsar the right to call himself not only Tsar of Muscovy, but also Tsar of Kazan, Astrakhan, and Siberia as the lawful successor of their conquered rulers. From a commercial and economic point of view the Tsar's readiness to welcome foreigners, both English and Dutch, had far-reaching results; it also taught the Russians the importance of the Dvina as an outlet into the White Sea, the town of Archangel being founded in 1583.

By the time of Ivan the Terrible's death in 1584, autocracy and despotism had been raised to a pinnacle on which his immediate successors did their best to keep it.

After Ivan's death, his son Feodor (1584–1598), who was feeble both in mind and body, ascended the throne, but although nominally Ruler of All the Russias, it was his brother-in-law, Boris Godounov, who governed in his name. The weak-minded but harmless youth, whose inclination was

to play at religion, and whose principal amusement was to ring the church bells, was only too glad to leave all his responsibilities in the hands of his capable brother-in-law. That Boris Godounov, a man of Tatar origin, a companion of the Tsar Ivan, and yet one who never took part in his infamous amusements, was nevertheless trusted by the tyrant, speaks well for his diplomatic tact. He was appointed by Ivan the Terrible to be one of the four councillors who after his death were to assist his son in governing Muscovy.

This clever, capable, and gifted minister ruled Russia with wisdom and discretion, gaining considerably in prestige by his foreign policy. During the fourteen years of his deputed power the country enjoyed a period of rest and calm, during which the wounds of the nation began to heal. His enormous wealth enabled Boris to dispense charity on a lavish scale, especially during a terrible famine which killed off hundreds of thousands of people. So great was this calamity, that all the efforts of the ruler could not prevent cannibalism from spreading to a frightful extent, but his noble conduct and paternal care of his people during this period of stress caused them to bestow upon him the name of "Father." This otherwise fine character, however, was marred by the canker of ambition, in order to satisfy which he misused his administrative powers.

The economic conditions of the vast Empire were complicated by sparsity of population : land was of little value without labourers to work it. The demand was much greater than the supply, which was still further diminished by the peasants' habit of migrating to pastures new, especially to the south ; and the landowners thus found themselves left in the lurch. The position of the peasant had hitherto been one of negative liberty : no one interfered with him, and he was free, if not satisfied with master or land, to move on. Once a year, on St George's Day, he could move to whatever place seemed to promise him a greater reward for his toil. Slavery did exist, but it was limited to prisoners of war.

As Boris Godounov could not reckon on the support of the great Boyars in his ambitious schemes, he did his best to win

over the lesser nobles, who were the chief sufferers from the lack of labour. In 1597 he issued an ukase by which the peasants were tied down to the land, and in this way many millions of hitherto free people were changed into serfs. From a pecuniary point of view this law was a gain to the land-owners, who were now given the right to pursue and fetch back their fugitive serfs. Thousands of these fled to the Cossacks [1] on the Don, thus artificially increasing the turbulent, restless element in the land.

After the downfall of the Mongol Empire, Cossacks had settled on that river, whence they set out to fight against isolated tribes of Tatars; and there, as formerly on the Dnieper, runaway serfs, outlaws, and adventurers found refuge. The community thus formed came to be recognised by the Tsars as valuable frontier guards. The innate tendency of the Russian peasant to migrate to any part where free land is to be had has made him at all times a good colonist.

Cossackdom represented a distinct conception of freedom, of the warrior life; it had become a national institution, and at various outposts of the Muscovite Empire such warrior communities sprang up or were purposely organised by the State as colonising agents. The similarity of political and economic conditions all over Russia fostered this peculiar movement. Parties of Cossacks settled on the Ural River, whence later on some of them were transplanted by the Russian Government to the Kuban, there to act as a military vanguard.

Although Boris achieved his aim of winning the gratitude and thereby securing the adherence of the lesser nobility, still between him and his authority stood a young life—that of the infant brother of the Tsar. After the death of Ivan the Terrible, Boris Godounov had banished the seventh wife of the late Tsar, with her infant son, to Uglitch, a small town at some distance from Moscow. Some years later that city was startled by the news that the Tsarevitch, by that time a lad eight years old, had died, and the rumour quickly spread that he had been murdered. Although overcome with grief, Tsar Feodor took no measures to find out the

[1] See Chapter XXIII., "Don Cossacks."

truth of the report, simply accepting Boris Godounov's statement that the child had died of injuries received during an attack of epilepsy.

For the sake of appearances a commission of inquiry was instituted by the powerful minister himself. That the verdict of death by accident should be confirmed was a foregone conclusion, as the members of the commission were in his pay. Ostensibly to punish the culpable negligence of the Tsarevitch's *entourage*, but in reality to get rid of anyone who could reveal the truth, Boris had almost all the inhabitants of Uglitch massacred or sent into exile.

Seven years after the murder of the Tsarevitch the Tsar Feodor died, and with him the line of Rurik became extinct.

THE TSARDOM OF MUSCOVY.

III. PERIOD (1462–1689)

MUSCOVY

Period of Despotism.

- Ivan III. Vassilievitch (the Great) (1462–1505) marries niece of last Greek Emperor. Moscow the capital. First Hospodar of all Russia.
- Vassili III. Ivanovitch (1505–1533).
- Ivan IV. Vassilievitch (the Terrible) (1533–1584).

Feodor Ivanovitch (1584–1598).

CHAPTER V

THE PERIOD OF TROUBLE: USURPERS AND PRETENDERS

(1598–1612)

THE Tsar Feodor died without having made a will. He left the future of his realm "to the will of God." His widow was at once proclaimed Tsaritsa and allegiance was sworn to her, in spite of her honestly meant refusal to succeed her husband on the throne. Ultimately she gave in, but on condition that her brother, Boris Godounov, should continue to rule on her behalf as he had done on behalf of her late husband. She then entered a convent. Meanwhile, Boris having also retired to the same place, the government was carried on by the Council of Boyars in the name of this nun.

Three times did the Patriarch offer the crown to Boris Godounov, but he always refused it, as it was his ambition to be chosen by the nation and not by his creature the Patriarch. Some nine years previously, in 1589, the Tsar Feodor had succeeded in persuading the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was visiting Moscow to collect money, to consecrate the Metropolitan of Moscow as Patriarch. Up to that time there had been two Metropolitans in Russia—the one at Kiev, owing allegiance to Poland, and the other at Moscow, under the Patriarch of Constantinople, who himself was subject to the Sultan. This ecclesiastic, at the time of his visit, was a fugitive, and the wealth of Moscow inclined him to accede to the Tsar's request to confer on the Metropolitan of Moscow the dignity of the Patriarchate.

The man chosen for this honour was in the pay of Boris Godounov, and, as it was he who suggested offering the crown

to his patron, it is not surprising that the Boyars were loth to acknowledge their debt of gratitude, and gave only a half-hearted support to his candidature. In consequence of his persistent refusal to accept the crown, the National Council was called and, owing to pressure brought to bear on its

Jewelled Saddle of Boris Godounov (1598-1605).

members and bribery by the Imperial nun, Boris was elected Tsar of All the Russias.

If the new Tsar had been born to his position, his personality, his great gifts and administrative powers, would have made him a first-rate ruler; but the crime upon which his assumption of power had been based influenced all his future actions: fear of the Boyars, fear of the relations of the murdered Tsarevitch and his mother, turned Boris Godounov

into a despot. Although his tyranny did not make itself generally felt, and was not so sanguinary as that of Ivan the Terrible, it was quite bad enough. The Boyars in general and the family of the late Tsarevitch's mother—the Romanoffs —in particular, to their undoing, felt his iron grip. Exile and torture were freely used for the crushing of any possible rivals, and a system of espionage was introduced.

For fourteen years Boris Godounov reigned in Moscow, seven years as Regent and seven as Tsar (1598–1605). His mental qualities fitted him to govern, and his decided predilection for Western culture had a beneficent influence on barbaric Russia. Political sagacity made him seek an alliance with Austria and caused him to suggest the Tsar Feodor as candidate for the vacant throne of Poland, but, as before, Poland refused the honour of such close union with Muscovy.

It was during this period that a French vessel visited Archangel for the first time, an event which led to direct diplomatic relations with France. Foreigners—English, Dutch, and German—were welcomed; but, although Boris favoured the English, it was the Dutch who succeeded later on in gaining commercial ascendancy. The Tsar fully realised how very important it was for Russia to put an end to the isolation and seclusion hitherto persisted in. In the Tsar's closest *entourage* were to be found foreigners whose military and scientific achievements secured them positions of importance, and he had his son Feodor and his daughter Xenia educated by foreign tutors.

His plans for the founding of universities and schools show his appreciation of culture. He even sent a number of young Russians to Germany, France, and Belgium to be educated. For England, indeed, he had the most pronounced partiality —so much so, that he was called the " English Tsar."

The success of this foreign policy did not conduce, however, to internal quiet: a terrific storm was gathering. The Tsar Boris knew that he was hated by the Boyars, first on account of his servility to Ivan the Terrible, and secondly because he had succeeded where they had failed. He knew only too well that the people looked upon him with suspicion because

of his marriage with the daughter of Malyuta Skouratov, the chief of Ivan's company of demons, a leader in devilry and therefore the Tsar's favourite.

Another reason for animosity on the part of the citizens was the Tsar's partiality for foreigners, whom the Russian merchants looked upon as trade rivals. Finally the peasants were groaning under the bondage into which his ukase had thrown them. The great cities, which until recently had enjoyed a full measure of liberty under Lithuanian rule, grew restive under the Tsar's iron hand, as also did the Cossacks of the Don and the Volga, and even the lesser nobility, for whose sake free peasants had been made into serfs.

All over the Empire there was smouldering unrest: the evil days of Ivan were forgotten in the discontent created by present conditions. When, therefore, a man appeared who claimed to be lawful heir to the throne, a descendant of Rurik and son of Ivan—that very Dmitri who was supposed to have died in Uglitch,—the response to his appeal was tremendous.

Who this pretender really was has never transpired, or whether he honestly believed in his identity with the Tsarevitch. His history and personality are intensely interesting. A Polish magnate was the first to believe in his story, and procured for the pretender the whole-hearted support of the Polish Government—given perhaps more for the sake of harassing Russia and Boris Godounov than from any conviction of the righteousness of the cause. In return for the support given him, Dmitri agreed to surrender to Poland certain much-coveted territory, and promised the Papal nuncio to bring Russia into union with Rome and also to undertake a crusade against the Turks. He became engaged to Marina Mniszek, daughter of the Voyevod of Sandomir, who was to be married to him after his accession to the throne; to her he promised the Crown jewels treasured up in the Kremlin, and to her father the town of Smolensk. With Polish money and Polish soldiers to back him the pretender entered Russia, where the populace hailed him with joy. The Tsar Boris sent troops against him under Prince Vassili Shuiski; but that Boyar was in no hurry to

conquer the enemy of his enemy, and, although there were moments when defeat seemed inevitable, the efforts of the pretender were ultimately crowned with success.

Suddenly the Tsar died. Was it by poison taken in a fit of melancholy? Or was it from a paralytic stroke? Who can tell? After the death of Boris Godounov began a period of distress—the "troublous times,"—which lasted for eight years. Neither his son, a lad of sixteen years, nor his widow, the daughter of the most abhorred man in Muscovy, could reckon on support from the more or less disaffected army; and finally even Basmanov, a Boyar who had been a loyal friend to the late Tsar, realised that the choice lay between surrendering to the claims of the pretender or opposing him and being crushed. Consequently, when Dmitri appeared before Moscow his proclamation was readily listened to, the people, clergy, and Boyars acclaiming him Tsar. After his entrance into the Kremlin he did all he could to show respect to the memory of his "father" and brother, and finally he had a private interview with the Dowager Tsaritsa, who duly recognised him as her son.

The only man to uphold and spread the rumour that Dmitri was not what he pretended to be was Prince Vassili Shuiski, whose enemies denounced him to the new Tsar. He was condemned for treason, and his head was already on the block when at the last moment he was pardoned.

Dmitri (1605–1606) was crowned with great pomp and ceremony, and began his rule under the happiest auspices. He had vowed not to shed a drop of "Christian blood," and therefore only sent into exile the leading men of the Godounov party. He recalled from exile Philaret Romanoff, the head of his supposed mother's family, and appointed him Metropolitan of Pskov. He treated his subjects with kindness and liberality. He was gracious to foreigners and tolerant in religious matters; with regard to commerce it was his intention to introduce free trade; he made drastic changes in the judicial system, which at this time was based on bribery; and he also ameliorated the lot of the serfs.

Whoever this pretender may have been, he had a sympathetic personality: full of gaiety and the power of enjoyment,

he also possessed a cultured mind, pleasing manners, and perfect *savoir faire*. He must have been firmly convinced of his personal safety, his position, and the strength of his cause, for he dismissed his Polish army, retaining only a company of foreign mercenaries. An ardent admirer of the King of France, he did his best to introduce Western methods and customs into Asiatic Muscovy, and often pleasantly suggested to the Boyars that foreign travel was extremely beneficial. In dress, also, he introduced changes; Dmitri was the first Russian ruler to discard the flowing Tatar robes universally worn in Muscovy.

Those drastic innovations caused dissatisfaction among the conservative Boyars and all who resented any departure from tradition. Another great cause of discontent was the increasingly overbearing behaviour of the Polish nobles who had followed in Dmitri's train and settled in Moscow. A climax was reached when his young Polish bride arrived. Her gaiety and thoughtlessness and her inconsiderate demand for secular music in the nunnery where she spent the few days before her wedding, as also her refusal to wear the traditional but unbecoming garments compulsory for a Tsar's bride, greatly incensed the people, already offended with their Tsar for marrying an "unbaptised one," a term applied to Catholics by the fanatical Greek Orthodox Russians.

By his failure to restrain the future Tsaritsa from thoughtless and frivolous behaviour Dmitri played into the hands of the ambitious Prince Shuiski, who secretly fanned the discontent. Rumours spread that the "Latin heresy" was to be introduced into Russia, and the large party of arrogant Poles—Jesuits and princes—who accompanied the Polish bride-elect gave colour to this assumption.

Shuiski and the Boyars, by means of a ruse, succeeded in arranging a *coup d'état*. Eighteen thousand soldiers who were camping round Moscow were told that the Tsar had been taken captive by the Poles and that his life was in danger, whereupon they demanded to be entrusted with the protection of the Kremlin in place of the foreign mercenaries, who were to be sent away. Dmitri, though warned of danger, ignored it in the happy confidence that all was well; but during

a State ball which took place on the following night, when the great bells of Moscow sounded the alarm and the Boyars entered the Kremlin, the unhappy Tsar jumped out of a window to save himself, breaking his leg in the fall. Unable to escape, he was soon discovered and killed. His corpse was treated with indescribable savagery. After the mutilated body had been exposed three days to the gaze of the public, it was burnt and the ashes scattered to the winds.

The murder of the Tsar was followed by the massacre of over twelve hundred Poles; the young Polish Tsaritsa was spared, but, alas! for a life of shame. Dmitri's reign was beneficent, and his personality one of the most distinguished among Russian rulers. In all respects and in every sphere he outshone his predecessors in kindliness of nature, in intellectual culture, and ability. Barbaric Muscovy, however, was not yet ripe for a Europeanised ruler: Tatar despotism still appealed more to the Orientalised character of the people.

After the pretender's death Prince Vassili Shuiski (1606) usurped the throne. The joyousness of the Court of Dmitri was transformed into gloomy solemnity which, according to a Polish contemporary, "gave the impression of a permanent funeral." The next few years of Russian history were full of violence, civil war, and anarchy. Pretender after pretender put forward a claim to the throne, either personally or as the puppet of a party of Boyars. Ultimately the usurper Shuiski was deposed, he retired to a monastery, and once again the country was ruled over by the Council of Boyars.

The problem as to who the new Tsar was to be was urgent and very difficult, for no party felt itself strong enough to support successfully its own candidate. Moscow was threatened by two hostile armies, one the Polish army, the other led by a rebel—the so-called "Brigand of Touchina"—a Cossack pretender whom the widow of the first pretender had been forced by her father to recognise and to accept as her husband.

At this juncture the Boyars decided to offer the crown to Vladislav, son of the King of Poland; the latter, however,

desired it for himself. Russia was in desperate straits : on the one hand she was in danger of being reduced to the status of a province of Poland, which fate, it is true, would have brought her into touch with Western civilisation, but at the cost of her independence ; and on the other she was threatened with domination by robbers and Cossacks, which would have meant anarchy and a total relapse into barbarism.

But when things seemed at their worst, the incredible happened, and Russia was saved from foes without and within. The people, the enslaved peasants and the downtrodden citizens, came to the rescue : national consciousness awoke and the nightmare of foreign rule was lifted. The way for this deliverance was prepared by a religious revival : a wave of penitence and humiliation swept over the land, the monks of the famous Troitza monastery leading the movement. Just as in the days of lawlessness in Israel God raised up men to deliver the people, so now He raised up two deliverers for Russia—Minin, a butcher of Nijni Novgorod, and Pojarski, a country squire. Each of these men called upon the class to which he belonged to work for unity, and at the cost of great self-denial and sacrifice an army was raised and equipped. A mighty wave of national enthusiasm carried the people along with it ; part of the Cossack army which was investing Moscow was won over by the national party, the Poles were driven out of the city, and Moscow was restored to the Russian people. Minin, Pojarski, and the priest Palitsin shared the supremacy during the ensuing interregnum until a new Tsar could be elected and the old capital once more be placed under a lawful ruler. Russia was saved by this triple dictatorship of sincere patriots, who, themselves men of the people, understood the people.

Although the Russian nation seemed reduced to the verge of inertia by despotism, her vitality had not been utterly destroyed. A Council of the nation met in solemn deliberation, and, contrary to the wish of the Boyars, who favoured a Polish candidate, it was decided not to elect any foreigner. Yet it was no easy task to decide upon a " Russian-born " candidate in the midst of the clamour raised by rival factions.

The terrible upheavals which took place during this

" Period of Trouble " (1598–1612) are due chiefly, according to Professor Klyuchevski, to two causes: the extinction, after nearly eight centuries of rule, of the Rurik dynasty, which gave rise to a succession of pretenders, and the conditions created by the perpetual strife between the different classes, each supporting a Tsar of its own.

Ultimately Mikhail Romanoff, a youth of sixteen, son of the Metropolitan Philaret and a relative of the first wife of Ivan IV.—Anastasia Romanoff—was elected Tsar.

PERIOD OF TROUBLE

BORIS GODOUNOV (1598–1605).
Feodor Borissovitch (1605).
PSEUDO DMITRI (1605–1606).
Vassili V. Shuiski (1606–1610).
Interregnum and Period of Anarchy. Vladislav of Poland (1610–1613).

CHAPTER VI

THE ROMANOFFS

(1612–1689)

Mikhail Romanoff was chosen Tsar, not on account of any special virtue in himself, but because of the popularity enjoyed by his family, which some three hundred years previously had come over to Muscovy from Prussia, at the time when that country was still inhabited by Slavs. The Romanoffs had an unstained record, and, although only untitled Boyars, their position had never been questioned by their peers. Their integrity, love of learning, and charm of manner had made them popular in each successive generation.

There were two other factors which told strongly in Mikhail's favour : his youth, which the Boyars hoped would render him a pliable tool, and the whole-hearted support given him by the two great parties which had been instrumental in liberating Russia from Polish supremacy—namely, the citizens and the lesser nobility in conjunction with the Cossacks. In fact, the election of Mikhail Romanoff may be looked upon as a national reaction.

A new era opens up with the election of Mikhail Romanoff and the establishment of a new dynasty. The "Period of Trouble" had come to an end, and out of the political and economic upheavals a new structure arose. Many old and cherished ideas and conceptions had to be discarded, and new ones, due to the altered conditions created during the troubled period of lawlessness, took shape. The old political traditions of the personification of the State in the Tsar ("L'état c'est moi"), and of the will of the sovereign as the sole expression of the State, had been shaken to their

very foundations. The people had witnessed the impotence of Tsars who were merely usurpers and pretenders and had not a nation behind them; they had also passed through times when there was no Tsar, and when nevertheless Russia had managed to exist. The "State of Muscovy" came to represent a political conception in which the idea of the nation, as apart from the sovereign, was expressed. Recent experience had proved that, although a nation could exist without a Tsar, no Tsar could exist without a nation.

The unparalleled conditions created by the extinction of the Rurik dynasty led to the election of a Tsar, and, even though this was achieved by means of the intrigues of the different ruling parties, still, nominally it was done by the will of the nation. Their Tsar was no longer a "divinely appointed" ruler, but one only in virtue of the will of the people expressed by the Zemski Sobor, which consisted of representatives of the clergy, the Boyars, the lesser nobility, the leading merchants and commercial men of all ranks, and of the rest of the free populace. In every sphere of life innovations crept in and a new class of courtiers developed—a class of mere parvenus.

The elected Tsars surrounded themselves with the men who had supported them and whose capacity and gifts had brought them to the fore. The position of the Tsar towards the Boyars also underwent a change. In former days their mutual relations had been based on custom and not upon any fixed law. All this was now altered: precedents were created and definite rules were established, and by the very fact that the Empire could no longer be claimed by the Tsar as his ancestral patrimony the demand of the Boyars to participate in the government had more justification than before.

Gradually the new political and administrative idea of a triumvirate of "Sovereign, State, and Nation" was evolved: *i.e.* the Tsar was to hold his crown in virtue of heredity, but also by grace of election. He was to be a limited monarch, and to share his rule permanently with the Council of Boyars, and in exceptional cases also with the Zemski Sobor, *i.e.* with the National or "Territorial Council."

The Polish Prince Vladislav, to whom the crown of Moscow

had previously been offered, but who had lost it through the treachery of his father, Casimir II., nevertheless persisted in his claim to be Tsar. The Poles refused to recognise the newly elected Tsar, Mikhail Romanoff, the first action of whose reign was to wage war against both Poland and Sweden, his arrogant neighbours. Ultimately it was decided to settle all diplomatic differences by means of a conference, an Austrian envoy acting as arbitrator. Although this mediator failed, in 1615, to reconcile "fire and water," the English and Dutch plenipotentiaries proved more successful in 1617, when at the Treaty of Stolbovo the vexed question of the disputed provinces was settled and a compromise with Sweden agreed upon.

Russia was thus set free to fight against Poland, with whom also, two years later, a treaty was concluded. A truce of fourteen and a half years was decided upon, and, in consideration of the right to retain Smolensk and other provinces, the Polish prince resigned his claim to the throne of Muscovy and an exchange of prisoners took place.

The father of the Tsar, Philaret, Metropolitan of Rostov, who was among the prisoners, then rejoined his son, who was in urgent need of a strong and permanent adviser. During the first years of his rule he had been a pliant instrument in the hands of the Council of Boyars, who on his accession had made him swear not to put any of them to death nor to decide anything without their consent: their horrible experiences during the last reigns forced the Boyars to safeguard their persons against any possible arbitrary action on the part of the Tsar. They exacted from him a promise to leave all matters of administration in their hands: in fact, they deprived him of any right to initiative. The Boyar Council and the National Council practically ruled the country: the Tsar convened the National Council ten times; having been elected to power by it, he could not refuse it a share in the government.

The first task of the new régime was to establish internal order and to clear the country of the turbulent and dangerous element of robbers and outlaws, and last, but not least, to keep down the Cossacks, who by the freedom they enjoyed

attracted the down-trodden serfs in ever-increasing numbers. The Cossacks of the Dnieper fought under Poland against Russia, while those of the Don owed allegiance to Muscovy. A large number of these, however, had followed the second pretender, Dmitri, whom Marina, wife of the first pseudo-Dmitri, had joined in a career of adventure which ended in disaster. Marina herself was interned for life in a nunnery, her Cossack lover was impaled, and their little son was hanged.

On his return from captivity the Tsar's father was raised to the Patriarchate, and till Mikhail's death in 1645 father and son acted as co-rulers of Russia, to the great advantage of the country. Philaret was a strong, clever, and cultured man, a born diplomat and ruler of men : he occupied in Russia the place held in England by Cardinal Wolsey and in France by Cardinal Richelieu. It was he who directed the foreign policy and controlled the internal affairs of the Empire. Having been taught Latin by an Englishman, and having travelled to Western Europe, he realised the vital importance to Russia not only of attracting but also of retaining the foreigners who now began to flock into the Muscovite Empire. He organised an army of foreign mercenaries and secured the services of foreign officers, among whom the English were given preference. The only drawback to this arrangement was the Muscovite notion that "once in Russian service, always in Russian service," and those who desired to return to their respective countries were forcibly prevented from doing so and were sometimes even imprisoned.

The Streltzi, or Russian militia, were reorganised, and, instead of being as hitherto led by Boyars, capable men of military talent were appointed officers. By this arrangement the army and the aristocracy became estranged and the power of the latter considerably curtailed : the Streltzi were forced to marry in order to have sons, who were to become soldiers in their turn.

The two Tsars—for their relationship amounted to this—introduced many changes into commercial life, and with the help of foreigners industrial enterprise was developed and fostered.

Economic conditions also required readjustment. During

the period of anarchy, landownership had rapidly declined and taxation was weighing heavily on the peasantry. Dissatisfaction was rife, and complaints were made by the Russian people, who were no longer the silent, long-suffering slaves to which despotism had reduced them.

Philaret treated the Boyars with a high hand, yet he managed to limit their power without arousing their active antagonism.

Despite his usurpation of power, the Regent ingeniously evaded conflicts with his son, being too wise, too experienced and far-seeing to risk a rupture. There were moments when he actually took a higher position than his son, when for instance, in the procession on Palm Sunday the Tsar had to lead the horse of the Patriarch, who incidentally was also his father.

Double Crown of the Co-Tsars Ivan and Peter.

The reign of the first of the Romanoff dynasty having proved beneficent, it naturally followed that on the death of the Tsar Mikhail he was succeeded by his son Alexei (1645–1676), then only sixteen years of age. Once again an immature youth became nominal head of the State, while the real power was wielded by a strong man, the young Tsar's tutor Morozov. This man brought about a marriage between his pupil and a girl belonging to the family of the Miloslavskys, an insignificant Boyar family, with which he then allied himself by marriage, increasing in his capacity of brother-in-law his power and authority. In league with the President of the High Court of Justice, Morozov introduced a reign of nepotism and corruption ; bribery became the only means of obtaining a favourable verdict, and the burden of taxation fell more and more upon the helpless peasants and citizens.

The moment, however, arrived when the down-trodden people rebelled against the systematic oppression to which they were subjected, and more especially against their two powerful oppressors. One day, when the Tsar was riding through Moscow, one of the desperate citizens stopped his horse and forced the ruler to listen to his subject's appeal

for justice. Alexei promised to instigate an inquiry, but this answer was not sufficient to satisfy the exasperated suppliants. A terrible riot broke out which lasted for three days, and Morozov would undoubtedly have been murdered if the Tsar had not pleaded, with tears, for the life of his "second father." Being a clever man, Morozov amended his ways and from that time onward gave no further cause for complaint. The evils existing in the economic and judicial system were, however, so deep-rooted, and riots and risings were consequently of such frequent occurrence, that the Tsar finally decided to have the laws revised, and in 1648 a new code was introduced. At the same time he created the "Department of Secret Affairs," a kind of secret service, as a means of preventing further revolts.

The reign of Alexei Mikhailovitch was rich in important innovations which prepared the ground for the great changes and reforms introduced later on by his son Peter. What Philaret had begun was now carried on a stage further, partly because the Tsar was attracted by any innovations which smoothed his political path or which were of personal benefit to himself, but more especially because he had able and far-seeing statesmen to advise and assist him.

In every sphere of life reforms were inaugurated: the army was reorganised, trade placed on a more solid basis, and the public welfare promoted in every way. With regard to foreign policy, war and peace with Poland and Sweden alternated until, in 1667, the differences between Poland and Russia were temporarily settled. Although Russia lost certain territories, she gained others, among them Smolensk, the much-coveted city, and that part of the Ukraina in which Kiev was situated. Even though this union of the Ukraina [1] with Muscovy remained for another century more or less a "personal" union with the Tsars, and only meant a territorial gain of three thousand square miles, it was of great value, as it definitely settled the Cossack problem. Those inveterate fighters from the Dnieper, the Zaporogian Cossacks, were thus transformed from dangerous foes into useful allies. The Cossacks of the Don, however, remained a potential element

[1] See Chapter XXII., "The Ukraina; the Cossacks of the Dnieper, or the Knights of the Zaporogian Setcha."

of the unrest which in the great rising under Stenka Razin in 1670 found its most marked expression.

Stenka did not aim at being a pretender to the crown : his ideal was to be, not a Tsar, but a " brother " of the people. Unfortunately, however, in his hatred of the Boyars, he permitted his followers to commit such acts of cruelty that his name became a terror to the upper classes, though to the Russian peasant he is, even to-day, a hero—a deliverer from oppression. They believe that he never really died, and are convinced that he will reappear in the hour of their need.

At the Treaty of Westphalia on the close of the Thirty Years' War, the Russian Tsar, who had become the ally of Sweden, made his voice heard for the first time in the councils of Europe. From this time Russian ambassadors more frequently visited European Courts, which in return sent their representatives to the Russian Court. A " Department for Foreign Ambassadors " was organised in Moscow. This increased intercourse with Western Europe necessitated a regular postal service, and the honour of being the first to bring Russia into the Postal Convention belongs to the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovitch.

Foreigners of every nationality and condition visited and even settled in Moscow, where the Tsar favoured the creation of the so-called " German suburb "—a kind of foreign quarter where they were free to live in their own style and manner, apart from the noise and insecurity of the Russian capital. Relations with England, however, grew strained, and ended in the temporary expulsion of all English merchants from Moscow, in consequence of the Tsar's indignation with the English as a whole nation.

In the year 1645 a Russian envoy, demanding a personal interview with King Charles I., found that he was expected to deal with the Parliament instead, and refused to do so. When he reported to the Tsar later on that the English had imprisoned their king, Alexei Mikhailovitch's anger was aroused and vented on the British merchants, restricting their hitherto unhampered activity by irritating and contradictory orders. The Russian merchants took the opportunity afforded by the Tsar's attitude to present a complaint regard-

ing the detrimental effect of British trade in Russia ; when, therefore, the news of the execution of King Charles reached Russia, he expelled the English altogether as members of a nation guilty of the crime of regicide. The Russian merchants hailed this decision with joy : it, however, proved only a temporary measure, for foreign articles in general, and even objects of luxury, had become a necessity to the wealthy members of the community, the whole standard of life having been raised.

As in all times of transition, two tendencies were struggling for supremacy : the old exclusive Tatar tendency towards obscurantism was resisting the influx of new conceptions and ideals. This was manifested in the attitude taken up by many in regard to education and the marked progress of civilisation. They feared the introduction of learning as dangerous both to the national and to the spiritual welfare of the people. This clinging at all costs to the traditions of the past found its most startling expression in the Great Schism, called forth by the reforms of the Patriarch Nikon, whose influence over the Tsar became paramount, and who played as important a rôle during this reign as his predecessor the Patriarch Philaret had played during the previous one. The gentle, clinging, and intensely religious nature of Tsar Alexei yielded readily to the masterful personality of the Patriarch, whose ascendancy over the young ruler became absolute—although, at the same time, a genuine friendship existed between the Tsar and his spiritual adviser.

The Patriarch Nikon owed his exalted position to his own great gifts. He was the son of a peasant, but he displayed such administrative talent in the various monasteries to which he was sent that he was made Metropolitan of Novgorod. There, during a crisis, he rendered such services to the Muscovite Government that later on he was appointed to the Patriarchate, by virtue of which he wielded the highest ecclesiastical authority. The Tsar readily accorded him the position of co-ruler which his grandfather Philaret had so successfully occupied.

The new Patriarch was a cultured man, whose ambition it was to reorganise the Russian Church. He introduced

changes, which, however, found no favour amongst the majority of an utterly uneducated clergy: he refused to ordain illiterate men, enforced a more decorous behaviour during service, and insisted that prayers should be read more audibly and reverently. Himself a good preacher, he demanded that sermons should be preached by the other clergy, a hitherto unheard-of thing.

In 1649 the Patriarch of Moscow invited some monks from Kiev to make, from the original, an exact translation of the Bible into Slavonic, as an authorised version for use in the Russian churches. It had become apparent that there was no uniformity in the text of the various missals used in the churches. Nikon wished to remedy this, and also to eliminate many clerical errors which had crept into the text owing to the ignorance of copyists.

The Patriarch had not expected that these innovations would arouse a storm. The common people, however, and many of the clergy saw in this revision an attack on their faith. They feared that their salvation was endangered, they apprehended the reign of Antichrist, and, supported by all the adversaries of culture and progress, the masses refused to worship and the priests to officiate according to the revised version. The points upon which this divergency of opinion existed were trifling in themselves, but they appeared of vital importance to the Russian people. The bitterest strife was waged about such minutiæ as crossing with three instead of with two fingers, or as the repetition of "O Lord, have mercy," instead of simply "Lord, have mercy." The people endured torture and banishment rather than repeat three hallelujahs, as the Reformers wished, instead of two. There was a blind and desperate clinging to the past, and a terrible fear lest salvation should be endangered by these impious innovations.

Neither the ecclesiastical party which imposed the reforms nor the laity and clergy which opposed them were able to distinguish between the essential and the unessential; both sides showed themselves equally fanatical. The "Old Ritualists," as they called themselves, were subjected to fierce persecution and to the martyrdom of thousands.

Many of these " Raskolniki " or schismatics saved themselves from death and banishment only by escaping into the forests, where, later on, they split up into new subdivisions.

An estrangement gradually made itself felt between the Tsar and the Patriarch. This was due to several causes, the chief among these being the fact that the Tsar, during a prolonged absence from Moscow as leader of the army against Poland, had gained in experience, self-confidence, and manliness, and had begun to crave for independence. The rule of the Patriarch during his absence had been excellent, but by his arrogant manner he had alienated both Boyars and Tsaritsa.

Had the Tsar been of a less gentle nature, the friendship between him and the powerful co-ruler would never have lasted as long as it did. A rupture was inevitable, and, urged on by the Boyars and by his wife, the Tsar unwittingly brought about the crisis. He sent a message to the Patriarch to ask by what right he was assuming the title of " Great Ruler." Nikon's reply to this provocation was to send in his resignation. This was more than the Tsar anticipated, but it was too late for either side to draw back. Nikon's enemies made use of the strained situation, accusing him of ecclesiastical misdemeanour, and a Council was called to sit in judgment on him in which even ecclesiastics of the Eastern Church took part. The great reformer was condemned and banished. Strangely enough, although he himself was deprived of all authority and power, his revisions and reforms were accepted by the Council and introduced into the Russian Church.

The reign of Alexei Mikhailovitch was rich in striking personalities who, each in his sphere, promoted the Europeanising of Muscovy. One of these pioneers of education derided the obscurantists by comparing them to owls, who, he said, had no right to express an opinion on the sun, as the optic organs of the owl were unable to endure the light. In spite of opposition from the extremists, education made progress, and to have their children educated by foreign tutors became the rule among wealthy princes and Boyars.

The leaders of this new movement were some cultured monks from Kiev, introduced into Moscow by Nikon and supported by such statesmen as Ordin-Nashtchokin and Rtishtchev, who, each along his own lines, furthered the cause of civilisation. Western culture found permanent entrance into Russia, but although individual representatives of foreign nations left their mark, and eminent Germans especially had great and lasting influence, the most important external medium of culture was Poland. One half of Russia had been for centuries under Lithuanian—*i.e.* Polish—influence, and a large section of Russian society had strong political and family ties with Poland, consequently her influence was naturally predominant. The most vital cultural influence, however, came to Muscovy from Kiev, which in course of time had once more attained the high position of leader of Russian spiritual and national life.

It had become imperative for Russia to assimilate all the best that the West could offer her. Consequently not only European comforts like chairs and carriages, luxuries like foreign wines, exotic plants, and expensive clothing, were introduced, but general knowledge had to be easily accessible to the younger generation of the aristocrats. To this end Peter Mohyla, the Metropolitan of Kiev, a true statesman, proposed to the Tsar that a monastery should be established in Moscow where Greek and the Slavonic language should be taught. This suggestion was not accepted at the time, but, when the Patriarch of Jerusalem advised the Tsar to use his influence to further education and culture and to put them on a sound basis, Kiev was requested to send learned monks to Moscow for this purpose.

The most eminent among these was Slavinitski, who issued not only theological but also scientific books. He translated Thucydides into Russian, and also works on history, philology, archæology, geography, and medicine. His nomination to the position of manager of the Imperial Printing Works gave him a free hand in literary activity, and his position as priest enabled him to spread his views from the pulpit by means of his powerful sermons. He protested energetically against the low conception of religion which considered the

invocation of saints sufficient to deliver a man from sin. Slavinitski's influence was great and beneficent; in him common sense, sound learning, and true spirituality were harmoniously blended.

The fact that the Tsar realised that secular education was not only harmless but very beneficial to the nation is shown in his proposal to found schools in which highly educated foreigners should be appointed as masters.

Another influential monk must be mentioned, Simeon Polotski, whom the Tsar had met in Poland and engaged as tutor to his children. This versatile man was a brilliant preacher, a writer of religious as well as secular drama, and acted as an intellectual stimulus to the Tsar as well as to his *entourage*. From 1670 Polotski directed the Imperial Printing Works, issuing educational and historical works and also works of fiction. Foreigners introduced the drama into Muscovy to replace the coarse marionette shows which were the only form of dramatic entertainment then prevalent in Russia. The chief patron of the drama was the Tsar, who, according to his English physician, Horsley, once watched for ten consecutive hours the tragedy of *Ahasuerus and Esther*, written and staged by a Protestant clergyman in charge of the German Church in Moscow. Sixty-four young foreign officers and merchants had been trained by him to act in this play, which proved a great success and helped to promote histrionic effort.

Among the various eminent men who lent lustre to the reign of Alexei Mikhailovitch must also be mentioned the Tsar's Chancellor, Ordin-Nashtchokin, a statesman of exceptional breadth of vision, who realised that success in military and political enterprise was of little permanent value unless supported by corresponding internal development and progress. He has justly been called the Colbert and Louvois of Russia, since he inaugurated far-reaching reforms in the army and in commerce. In the character of this first "truly European" statesman honesty and painstaking industry were blended with great diplomatic skill. Ordin-Nashtchokin may be considered a forerunner of Peter the Great.

Next to him in constructive activity stands Rtishtchev,

Vladimir Monomach, Grand Duke of Kiev (1113-1128), in Council with his advisers.

From a wooden panel carved in 1551 on the Imperial Seat of the Tsar, Ivan the Terrible, in the Church of the Assumption in Moscow.

whose aim it was to create more equitable relations between the classes. The third of these eminent leaders of Russian progress was the cultured and refined Boyar Artamon Matveiev, who was married to a Scotch lady, *née* Hamilton, and whose father had been ambassador to various European Courts. Although these statesmen were far in advance of their time, they were nevertheless truly national in spirit.

Another man who left his mark on this period was a Serbian, Krishanitch, who was the forerunner of Panslavism and the first to suggest to the Russian Tsar the political and national advisability of making the cause of the Slav peoples of the Balkans his own. Unfortunately for this prophet, his candour irritated the autocrat. He preached the doctrine that empires do not exist for Tsars but Tsars for empires, and he also expressed his strong conviction that Russian tyranny was worse than any other. The fact that Krishanitch was a member of the Roman Church and advocated a political union with Poland, combined with his fearlessness of speech, cost him his liberty. He was banished to Tobolsk, where he wrote his famous treatise on Panslavism.

Concurrently with this tendency to culture there ran a stream of reaction which sporadically broke out in anti-foreign agitation such as that to which the wise Patriarch Nikon had fallen a victim. In the eyes of the conservative hierarchy and laity Russia was in danger from two separate quarters—Roman Catholicism and Protestantism; the one being promoted by Polish, the other by German influence, through the many foreigners in the capital. The dilemma consisted in the undisputed fact, that the State needed foreigners to organise it on European lines, and that the Church also required help from the cultured West. But how to utilise, assimilate, and adapt this help without losing national characteristics? That was the problem to be solved by statesmen, Tsars, and clergy.

It was in the house of Artamon Matveiev that the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovitch met the young Natalia Naryshkin, his friend's niece, a very beautiful but also an exceptionally well-educated girl, whom he chose as his second wife. The new Tsaritsa, although much younger than the

Tsar's eldest daughter, greatly influenced her husband during the five years of their married life. Natalia was an exception among the ladies of her time ; brought up by her two Scotch aunts, she had been accorded in her broad-minded uncle's house all the educational and social privileges denied to her less fortunate Russian sisters.

The Tsar's last actions were quite in keeping with his gentle and amiable character : he proclaimed an amnesty, recalled all exiles from their place of banishment, and remitted all overdue taxes. His eldest son Feodor he blessed as his successor, and his infant son Peter he entrusted to the care of Artamon Matveiev, his wife's uncle.

During Alexei Mikhailovitch's reign Muscovy had entered the Concert of Europe, and, although her contribution to the harmonies and dissonances of the general ensemble might easily have passed unnoticed, nevertheless her participation in it had become an established fact, and particularly so where Turkey was concerned. It was a fortunate coincidence that the pioneers of culture, the heralds of a new era—the Europeanisation of Russia—lived in the reign of so broad-minded and kind-hearted a monarch. Without his whole-hearted support their efforts would have been far less successful.

In 1676, five years after his marriage to Natalia Naryshkin, the Tsar died, and his son Feodor (1676–1682), whom he had entrusted to good masters, succeeded him on the throne. The wise and liberal education which had been given to this prince bore good fruit, and during an uneventful reign of six years the gentle Tsar followed in his father's footsteps both as to foreign and internal politics. Diplomatic relations with Western Europe were consolidated —with France especially they were friendly,—outstanding disputes with Poland were settled ; the Ukraina was more closely united to Russia ; and a truce of twenty years was concluded with the Sultan.

How great a change had come over the attitude of official and aristocratic Russia is aptly illustrated by the fact that Louis XIV. of France and William III. of England were now the models to be copied, no longer the Shah of Persia or the Sultan of Turkey.

Having been educated by one of the most eminent monks from Kiev, the Tsar Feodor genuinely cared for Western culture, and did his best to promote education. The Slavo-Græco-Latin College was founded in his reign, which was characterised by a constructive home policy.

The one act which was destructive, though only to become constructive, was the drastic manner in which he settled the vexed question of rank. The Tsar decided to abolish this perpetual cause of friction among his Boyars. The nobility had hitherto reckoned their importance in accordance with the positions held by their ancestors at the various princely Courts; a Boyar would in 1640 refuse to occupy any administrative or military position, or any post at Court, under a man whose ancestor might, in the thirteenth century, have held an inferior position. The crucial question was whether the ancestor of a noble had served an appanage or suzerain prince. Every Boyar family possessed a genealogy in which the rank of service of his ancestors was tabulated, and in all disputed cases it was this "Rodoslovie" or "family record" which was consulted. This system of "Miestiechestvo" or "rank by service" complicated the administration to such an extent that the Tsar decided to cut the Gordian knot with his sword of autocracy. On a certain day the unsuspecting nobles were ordered to bring their treasured records to the Tsar, who had every one of them burned, thus making a clean slate. The discomfited Boyars had to make "bonne mine au mauvais jeu," and had to pretend to be satisfied with new documents simply recording their status at that date.

The death of the Tsar Feodor inaugurated a period of family feuds. In the ordinary course of events the Tsar's second brother Ivan would have succeeded, but unfortunately he was feeble-minded. The respective relations of his father's two wives struggled and intrigued for supremacy, each party claiming power through the person of the two candidates for the throne. Ivan's mental and physical defects afforded his mother's family, the Miloslavskis, an opportunity of exercising pressure to secure authority, which, however, was successfully contested by the Naryshkins, and

these, supported by the Patriarch, proclaimed the young Peter Tsar and his mother Regent.

Their calculations had, however, been made without taking a most important fact into consideration, namely, the personality of the late Tsar's sister, the Tsarevna Sophia, who, although not the eldest of the Tsar Alexei's six daughters, was by far the most ambitious. The terem, the women's department of the Kremlin, in which two generations of Imperial widows and spinsters were living together, was a hotbed of intrigue, and indeed the only variety from the terrible monotony of the life of seclusion to which the Imperial princesses were condemned by Russian custom was intrigue. The Princess Sophia, who had been educated by the same tutor, Simeon Polotski, as her brother Feodor, was much better instructed than any Russian princess had ever been before, and she not unnaturally chafed under the Oriental system of female seclusion. Her imagination had been inflamed by stories from Byzantine history of woman's life, and her desire to play a great rôle by assuming regal power was fostered by a monk who put before her the example of the Empress Pulcheria of Byzantium.

She finally succeeded in her ambitious scheme ; a *coup d'état* was prepared and carried out with the help of the Streltzi or militia, whose chief was an adherent of the Miloslavski party. A false alarm that the Tsar Ivan had been murdered by a member of the Naryshkin family served as pretext for action, and a sanguinary palace revolution quickly placed the coveted power in the hands of the Tsarevna, who was proclaimed Regent on behalf of her two minor brothers, the younger of whom, Peter, she sent away with his mother, the deposed Regent, to Preobrajenskoe, a place some miles outside Moscow. The Tsarevna Sophia, the " Virgin Ruler," as she wished to be called, had now free scope for all her ambitious plans. She took part in the government of the country, personally presiding over the Council of Boyars ; she broke with every tradition, ignored every custom, spoke even with the common soldiers, and mixed with the men, till her behaviour scandalised the conservative citizens of her capital.

Clever though the Tsarevna was, she had a still cleverer adviser in the person of her lover, "the great Golitzin," as he was called by his contemporaries. Cultured and refined, a connoisseur of art and literature, the Prince was the first in Russia to possess a private library; his palace was more like an art gallery than a private house, full of treasures innumerable and costly. Prince Vassili Golitzin was also a first-rate diplomatist; for seven years he controlled the foreign policy of Russia on behalf of the Tsarevna, and the conclusion of the favourable Treaty of Androussovo was due to his skill. The vexed question of the Ukraina, about which war had been waged for over thirty years, was thus definitely settled. Through Golitzin's influence Russia also joined Poland, Austria, and Venice in the "Holy League."

This tolerant statesman offered an asylum to the persecuted Huguenots, for, although a great personal admirer of Louis XIV., Prince Golitzin strongly objected to intolerance, and especially to the use of coercion, in religious matters. Russia, like other States which gave refuge to the Huguenots, gained nothing but advantage from this large-hearted policy, for these French families and their descendants, as has been the case elsewhere, contributed greatly to the intellectual, scientific, and industrial progress of the country of their adoption.

Unfortunately for the Tsarevna, her other advisers were less Europeanised than Golitzin, and this circumstance led to frequent friction. The most reactionary and the most difficult to manage were the Streltzi, who reasoned that, as it was owing to them that the Regent had been raised to her present position, she should fall in with their ideas and should accede to their ever-increasing demands for special privileges. In order to obtain greater freedom of worship, the Streltzi, the majority of whom were Old Believers, instigated two risings. The Tsarevna finally summoned an Ecclesiastical Council, at which she was present, and in which bitter recriminations were made on both sides. The Old Believers, both lay and clerical, vehemently objected to the presence of a woman at the deliberations, and advised her to return to the terem, the only suitable place for women;

and, a general loss of temper ensuing, the Council ended in a fiasco.

The dissatisfied Streltzi stirred up another riot, in consequence of which the Tsarevna fled with her brother, the Tsar Ivan, to the Troitza monastery. From this impregnable stronghold she now vented her wrath on the Streltzi, whose chief she had beheaded. She then returned to the Kremlin with Ivan, but now an attack was made on her power from an unexpected quarter. Her younger brother Peter, who had been leading the irresponsible life of a boy at Preobrajenskoe, and whom she hoped to turn into a boor by depriving him of educational advantages, suddenly began to evince a keen interest in the affairs of the Government, appearing one day at the Council of the Boyars and calmly claiming his place as co-Tsar with his brother Ivan. He also effectively objected to a triumphal procession arranged by his sister for Golitzin on his return from a war against the Turks in which the Prince had been only partially successful.

The Tsarevna and her partisans soon realised that unless her brother were quickly rendered powerless her exercise of power would speedily come to an end. A plot was hatched and the Streltzi were informed that the Tsar Peter and his army of " play soldiers " were advancing against Moscow with the intention of killing the Tsar Ivan and his six sisters. As the Streltzi nourished a grievance against Sophia, only four hundred of them declared their readiness to stand by the Tsarevna ; these were given orders to kill the Dowager-Tsaritsa, and, should " her young cub " try to defend her, to kill him also.

Warned of this plot, Peter in his turn took refuge in the Troitza monastery, where he was joined by his mother and his wife Eudoxia, to whom he had been married when only a boy. From this place he issued his orders : ten men out of every regiment of Streltzi were to appear before him.

Sophia used every means in her power to retain her followers. She coaxed in vain, and threats proved equally useless ; none of the messengers she sent to her brother returned, not even the Patriarch, who until then had been her staunch supporter. In despair she set off in person to

throw herself on her brother's mercy, but on the way orders reached her to return to the Kremlin and also to hand over at once her favourite, the leader of the Streltzi. Unable to resist, the Tsarevna was forced to give in : her friend was delivered over to the Tsar, by whose order he was tortured and killed. Her chief adviser, Prince Golitzin, only escaped the same fate through the intervention of his nephew, Boris Golitzin, a great friend of the Tsar Peter, and, last but not least, the Tsarevna herself was condemned by her brother to a life of celibacy and seclusion. Forced to enter a convent, this ambitious and full-blooded woman had to spend the rest of her life as a nun.

The poor, feeble-minded Tsar Ivan remained untouched by all these changes : he acquiesced as readily in the plans of his brother Peter as formerly in those of his sister.

NEW DYNASTY

Mikhail Romanoff (1613–1645) : first of New Dynasty.
Alexei Mikhailovitch (1645–1676).
Feodor Alexeievitch (1676–1682).
Regency of Tsarevna Sophia Alexeievna (1682–1689) for Ivan V. Alexeievitch and for Peter I. Alexeievitch.

CHAPTER VII

PETER THE GREAT, THE EUROPEANISER OF RUSSIA

(1689–1725)

It was as the successor of the policy inaugurated by his great-grandfather Philaret and his father Alexei Mikhailovitch, and by making use of their wise measures of preparation, that Peter I. was able to gain his fame in history as the great Reformer of Russia.

Yet at all times and in all circumstances he must have stood out as a leader of men, a great organiser and administrator. The accident of his birth, which made him heir to the throne of Russia, only opened up a wider field of activity and gave him greater scope for display of his gifts. It was his character as a man, not his position as the Tsar, which made him what he was, and where a less capable and far-seeing man would have abused the power thus placed in his hands, he used it only to the advantage of his beloved people and of his country. This is the great fact which gives moral value to his gigantic personality.

The student of psychology will find intense interest in following the development of his character, and in tracing the early years of Peter's life we may clearly perceive the trend his future would take.

Sent into a kind of exile with his mother by his ambitious sister, the Regent Sophia, the boy was left pretty much to his own inclinations and devices, which found stimulus and outlet through the influence of capable, practical foreigners with whom he came in contact. It is reported that his imagination had been fired by coloured pictures of Germany, that he listened eagerly to stories about his father's reign,

and that his curiosity was aroused by an astrolabe, the use of which he wished to understand. Fortunately for him, the men to satisfy his curiosity and his zeal for learning were at hand, and although not instructed in the *finesse* of Greek and Slavonic, as his eldest brother and sister had been by the cultured monk who was their tutor, he was taught in a very practical way elementary science. A Dutch carpenter, a German doctor, and various foreigners of the "German suburb" were his first teachers. Without the knowledge of his sister he frequented these quarters, and there, in actual contact with men, he passed the initial stages of his education, acquiring much useful knowledge, but also some undesirable habits from intercourse with rough associates.

His inquisitive mind and his practical talents soon found an outlet, and his future reforms spontaneously evolved themselves out of boyish pursuits and games. He found an English sailing-boat, procured by his father as a model for a fleet, which had lain useless and forgotten in a shed, but it gave the impetus to Peter's love for the navy. A Dutchman taught him how to sail it himself, and as his skill increased his desire grew to sail on a wider expanse of water, and new boats were built by his orders. He had a vision, not only of a maritime outlet, but of a navy; and when, visiting Archangel, he beheld the White Sea and saw the foreign vessels in the harbour, his determination became fixed, not only to create a fleet, but to gain access to the sea. He never lost sight of this ambition, which explains the wars of later years.

Just as the navy of Russia owes its origin to his boyish delight in a discarded sailing-boat, so the nucleus of the future army was but a company of boy-soldiers with whom the Tsar played at war. What had been started for amusement gained in significance and importance: the Semeonovski Regiment, formed of the three hundred falconers, and the Preobrajenski Regiment, consisting of stable-boys, villagers, and companions of the young Tsar, had their origin in either case in these war-games, and by the time Peter had reached the age of nineteen and insisted on taking the reins out of his sister's hands, the number of these "play-soldiers" had reached fifteen hundred.

The young Tsar realised early that his position alone did not necessarily qualify him to take the command in these military games and therefore he secured the assistance of fully qualified instructors from among the foreign residents, two of whom, the Scotsman Patrick Gordon and the Swiss François Lefort, became from that time the young Tsar's friends and co-operators. This playing at war was taken with intense seriousness; trenches were dug, forts built, besieged, stormed, defended or taken, and in time the nucleus of a real army was formed and trained, in which, however, the Tsar only occupied the lowly rank of bombardier.

After the *coup d'état* in 1689, by which Peter had dethroned his sister and assumed the rulership which was his by right, the young Tsar left the actual rule of the realm in the hands of his maternal uncles, and pursued for another five years his scheme of fitting himself for the great task he had chosen, the creation of a navy and an army.

Soon after Peter's assumption of power there came a clash between the two opposing forces of the time in Russia—desire for progress and conservative clinging to traditions of the past. The occasion for conflict was a vacancy in the Patriarchate. The Reform party, under the leadership of the young Tsar, put forward the progressive Metropolitan of Pskov; while the Old Russian party supported the claim of the Bishop of Kazan, a strong Conservative, to whom a shaved chin was a sure sign of heresy.

Peter had been married when quite a youth, his mother hoping to distract him from his military games and foreign friends. His wife's whole family belonged to the anti-reform party, and as in face of their opposition the young Tsar did not feel strong enough to enforce his own wishes, the Metropolitan of Kazan, the representative of obscurantism, became Patriarch.

In regard to foreign politics Peter followed in the steps of his sister. As a member of the Holy League it was his duty to fight against the Turks, and, besides this, the Patriarch of Jerusalem had appealed to him on behalf of the downtrodden Balkan Christians. When, therefore, the Tsar decided to try his new ships in an attack on the Turkish

stronghold at Azov, whereby he hoped to gain access to the Black Sea, his political responsibilities afforded him a good pretext for making an attack on Azov. He therefore sent his infant fleet, built at Voronej, down the Don ; but this venture was doomed to failure. The navy was too new, too small, and not experienced enough to resist the Turkish fleet ; and added to all this was the treachery of a foreign engineer, who, in revenge for a rebuff given him by the Tsar, spiked the Russian guns before going over to the enemy.

For Peter, however, obstacles existed only to be overcome. Undaunted by this defeat, he returned to Moscow more persistent than ever in his intention to create a navy, which was to be ready within a year's time : twenty-six thousand men were set to work on it, and, although misadventures and delays took place to hinder the work, his ambition was realised, and after a space of twelve months seventeen hundred ships of all kinds were ready for use. Again he sailed for Azov, the fortress was forced to capitulate, and thus the outlet to the Black Sea was secured. The Tsar was delighted, triumphant—at last Russia had a port on the Euxine ! On his return to the Capital he called his Council, and in consultation with it he ordered three thousand Russian families and also four hundred Kalmucks and Streltzi with their families to settle at Azov as a permanent garrison. Churches were to be built and a base for naval activity was established. It was also decided to build warships and to send fifty young Russians to Western Europe to study shipbuilding and seamanship. These measures greatly incensed the reactionary party, whose anger increased when the Tsar announced his resolve to visit foreign lands in person.

Peter had already at this early stage of his reign a clear perception of his duty towards the people, whom he loved with a great and ardent love. He realised the gigantic nature of the task set before him, and that to change the passivity and dependence of his nation into activity and self-reliance both internal and external stimuli were required ; that if the Russian nation was ever to rise out of the morass into which Mongol and despotic rule had plunged it, strong measures must be used, including even force when necessary. It would

not suffice to have merely a few clever and cultured foreigners as leaders of the army or as diplomatists and craftsmen—their rôle should be limited to that of teachers, whose ambition it should be to make their pupils independent. The skilled foreigner was only to be a schoolmaster, with whose services the pupil when grown to manhood should be able to dispense. Peter realised that practice, and practice only, makes perfect; and that it was better for Russians to flounder and make mistakes for themselves than to let things be done very perfectly for them by foreigners.

The Tsar had before him the vision of his people's moral and economic awakening, and there came to him now the illuminating idea that practice not preaching would have the most lasting effect, and that only by setting an example himself could he be of real help to his people. Thereupon he decided to leave his exalted position, in order to become first an apprentice, then a skilled workman, and finally a teacher and an example. For this end he had to go to school.

He sent an imposing embassy of two hundred and seventy men, under the leadership of his beloved and admired friend Lefort, to the Courts of Europe, joining it himself in the capacity of a private gentleman under the pseudonym of "Peter Mikhailov." This mission proved a great success, and helped to change the conception hitherto held in Western Europe of the coarseness and boorishness of Russian ambassadors.

On the frontier of Holland the Tsar took leave of his party to become a humble shipbuilder. At Saardam he worked at high pressure, and those of his grandees who had followed him in personal attendance were made in their turn to tackle shipbuilding. During these months in Holland the eager Tsar, who wished not only to see but to understand every detail of what was new to him, exhausted his Dutch guides by his indefatigable energy. Not satisfied with personally gaining knowledge and skill, he wished his people to share his privileges, and to that end purchased mechanical models, collections of books, and natural history specimens. The "collection," however, in making which he took particular care was a company of officers, engineers, artists,

sailors, and workmen, all of whom he engaged for service in Russia.

While at work in Western Europe Peter kept in touch with home affairs, and his practical orders to those he had left in charge proved that his studies abroad in no wise absorbed him to the detriment of his realm.

From Holland Peter went on to England, where he studied shipbuilding at Deptford with the same thoroughness, thus learning what was most valuable in each country. His talks with William III. were of great practical use to him, for that experienced ruler was able to dispel some of Peter's political fallacies and illusions, which were mainly due to want of knowledge. The king also gave him sound advice on the subject of war with Turkey.

Avoiding France, which was the ally of Turkey at that time, he next proceeded to Austria, where he studied military science; but his plan to visit Italy was frustrated by the serious news that the Streltzi, his inveterate foes, had again risen in revolt.

The part played by this body of men in the life of the young Tsar had been a pernicious one, deeply and injuriously influencing his nature. As a young child he had witnessed the cruelty of the Streltzi to his mother and her family; their very existence acted as a poison on his system, and not even all his absorbing work could make him forgetful of their baneful power. Formerly they had been mere tools in his sister's hands; but by this time they had come to hate him on his own account, for, instead of being able to live the leisurely life of the militia, they had been forced by Peter to fight against external foes, had been sent to the south against the Turks, and had then been removed to the western frontier, and their fear was lest they should be turned into regular soldiers. They upheld, as a body, the old *régime*; many of them were also Old Believers, who abhorred the changes introduced by the Tsar in the matter of clothing and shaving of beards.

Although secluded in a nunnery, the ex-Regent Sophia had never lost her love of intrigue; from behind its walls she had fostered this rising—which, fortunately for Peter,

Patrick Gordon was successful in quelling by the time the Tsar reached Moscow.

On his way home Peter managed to visit the Polish king, with whom he planned a war against Charles XII. of Sweden.

Once more at home in his capital, the Tsar thoroughly investigated the Streltzi rising; he soon detected his sister's share in it, and even came into possession of an autograph letter which had been received from her by the leaders of the mutinous militia. The Tsar, so great in many respects, so unlike his predecessors in that he was often able to endure contradiction and humbly to accept honest and justified criticism, in the present emergency lost his moral balance. Whenever his straightforward nature encountered intrigue and deceit his hot temper was apt to break out, and now all self-control, all pity, seemed to have forsaken him, leading him to vent his wrath in a ruthless and brutal manner on the Streltzi and on the originator of the plot—his sister. Two thousand Streltzi were killed, many by his own hand, and the ex-Regent was locked up in a cell, outside the only window of which the corpses of Streltzi were hung, two of them holding in their stiffened hands her letter instigating the revolt.

When it became apparent to Peter that his wife also had supported this rising, which was intended to undo all his work, and when he understood that she had set his own son Alexei against him and his reforms, his fury knew no bounds. For some years he had lived separately from her, and now he compelled her to enter the Pokrovskoe nunnery at Suzdal, where, nine months later, she took the veil, thus making her marriage void.

After this terrible experience the Tsar decided to introduce drastic changes. He realised that the Russian nation could not be awakened by any gentle and gradual process; the lethargy of centuries had to be dispelled by vigorous means, and a succession of ukasi was issued by him to introduce reforms and to remove abuses. Peter had set himself the task of bringing Russia out of her isolation into permanent and not merely occasional touch with Western Europe. His nation had been left long—far too long—to itself and

to intercourse with the Mongols, who were morally on a lower level than the Russians. To teach his people right values and true proportions, they must associate themselves with their superiors in those very matters in which they stood higher than the Tatars.

The need for an outlet to the sea more and more began to influence the Tsar's foreign policy, for he had come to realise that, after all, Azov could not fulfil the great things he had hoped for from its acquisition, and that at all costs his country must have free access to the Baltic.

With this purpose ever before him, the Tsar did all in his power to accomplish his gigantic enterprise, but it took him twenty-one years to become acknowledged master of the much-coveted Baltic. A heavy price, however, had to be paid for this supremacy.

The " Northern War " (1700–1721), with its great defeat at Narva in 1704 and its decisive victory at Poltava in 1709 (and with its alternate gain and loss of territory), ultimately ended in complete victory for Peter, who was left in undisputed possession of the Baltic provinces of Livonia and Esthonia, and of the Finnish provinces of Ingria, Carelia, Wiborg, etc.

As early as 1703 the estuary of the Neva with the district surrounding it, and the Swedish fortress of Nyenschantz, had been taken by the Russians; there he founded St Petersburg, now Petrograd, for he found it absolutely imperative to transfer his seat of government to a new capital, whence, unhampered by Muscovite tradition, animosity, and obstruction, his reforms could be launched upon the empire.

To his mind Moscow, the ancient capital of Russia, was the citadel held by his enemies, the reactionaries who loved the old Tatar manner of life, with that comfort, indolence, and irresponsibility which could flourish only where ignorance reigned. Moscow, grown strong and come to power by means of Tatar favour, was the incarnation of all those evils which Peter purposed to abolish. St Petersburg, as he called his fair creation on the banks of the Neva, after his patron saint, was to be the stronghold of Western civilisation, a seat of learning and a generator of energy.

Peter's choice of locality was not without precedent: as early in the history of Russia as 1240 Alexander Nevski, Prince of Novgorod, in a desperate effort to wrest this region from the Swedes, won that famous victory on the Neva from which he got his name.

The waters of the mighty Lake Ladoga flowed through that river into the Gulf of Bothnia. Although the Neva was only thirty-six miles long, it united lake and sea, and might have linked up, by means of canals, the whole river system of the interior of Russia. The territory through which the Neva flowed and the western shore of Lake Ladoga belonged to Sweden; the eastern shore belonged to Russia. It was at the point where the river Volkhov flows into the lake that in 861 Rurik built the town of Ladoga, from whence he stretched out his hand over the Russian lands. Later on, where the Neva flows out of Lake Ladoga the Russians built the fort Oryechek; and several centuries later on that very spot Peter built his famous fortress—Schlüsselburg. Tradition, history, and commerce had linked Russia with Lake Ladoga, whose outlet to the sea remained in Swedish hands until Peter took possession of it in 1703.

Sweden had always known the value of this marshland, and, realising its political possibilities, had in 1300 A.D. built a fortress on the Neva: the Pope himself sent priests, equally skilled in the use of the trowel and the sword, to assist in thus establishing an outpost of Romanism on the borders of schismatic Russia.

The history of the frontier fortress, the battles waged against it, and its repeated reconstruction, prove that Peter the Great was only following out an old policy in utilising this tract of land. While, however, his Swedish predecessors had built their fortress, and later on a town, some miles below the estuary of the Neva, he decided on building St Petersburg on the numerous islands which formed the delta of the river. There, where Finnish fishermen used to eke out a precarious living, and where at a later date Swedish nobles had hunted elk, fox, and bear—there the Russian Tsar founded his new capital. The names of these islands still bear witness to the life led by the first Finnish settlers; it was on the

" Hare " island that the Tsar built the fortress of St Peter and St Paul.

It seems that the Tsar's idea had been to create a second Amsterdam, or perhaps a Venice of the North. The largest of the islands, now Vassili Ostrov, he intended to intersect with canals—a plan which came to nought, but to this day the regular " lines," as the streets are named, recall this frustrated scheme. Two hundred thousand men—among whom were Swedish prisoners of war, Esthonians and Letts, and some twenty thousand Cossacks—lost their lives in the swamps which it was their task to transform into dry land. It was said at the time that the soil was hardened by the bones of these victims.

For the Tsar, with his indomitable will, obstacles did not exist, and the beauty of the city which bears his name is a proof of his success in overcoming almost insuperable difficulties. This town was created by the Tsar's word of authority: his nobles were commanded to build themselves houses, and those who had masons among their serfs were obliged to send them to the banks of the Neva. The nobles groaned under this despotic order to build themselves houses on the marshland, for they infinitely preferred living on their estates or in Moscow, " the heart of the Empire." However, it was useless to battle against the hurricane let loose by the Tsar.

The Tsar's choice of a site for his new capital was severely criticised by his contemporaries: the deadly climate of the marshland, its close proximity to Sweden, and its distance from the centre of the vast empire were some of the objections brought forward. The newly acquired seaports on the Baltic—Reval and Riga—could never be rivalled by St Petersburg, as the Neva was too shallow for navigation by large vessels, but, never daunted, the Tsar established the Baltic wharf, at which a new fleet was built with feverish haste. He also obliged merchant ships to use the new harbour by putting prohibitive dues on that of Archangel, and by such methods he succeeded beyond expectation, for in 1725 two hundred and forty vessels visited St Petersburg, many of which were piloted by the Tsar in person.

Peter's illustrious antagonist, Charles XII., caused him much trouble, and when Mazeppa, the Cossack Hetman, joined the Swedish king, revolt was added to foreign warfare. The reasons which turned this Cossack into a traitor are not far to seek. Peter I. presented lands in the Ukraina to the Starostas, who had hitherto only held them by virtue of their office. He thereby changed Cossack lands into the private property of his grandees, and this arbitrary action led to dissatisfaction among the people of the Ukraina, whose sympathies, as a fact, were divided, some favouring Poland and some even Turkey. The Hetman Mazeppa, a personal favourite of the Tsar, cherished, unknown to Peter, the ambition of making himself King of the Ukraina. He knew full well that from national and political reasons the Tsar would never agree to the rise of an independent State in the south-west of Russia. Mazeppa therefore decided to offer his help to Charles XII. and thus attain his ambition. Although Peter was warned by trustworthy men of Mazeppa's treachery, he refused to believe it till the stern actuality of Mazeppa's revolt forced him to do so. Mazeppa's plot failed to secure him the desired aim: the majority of Cossacks did not join him, as anticipated, and the small number he could lead to his ally the King of Sweden was but a negligible quantity. At the battle of Poltava in 1709 Charles XII. was beaten, and the way to Russia's final success was opened up: she now stepped into the place hitherto occupied by Sweden as a first-class Power.

Simultaneously with the "Northern War" Peter also waged war against Turkey, the ally of Sweden. Envoys from the Balkan people had pleaded with him to deliver them from the oppression of the Turks, and the Tsar, considering himself their lawful defender, and reckoning on a general rising of the Balkan population, had marched against the Turks. The undertaking, however, failed, and nearly ended in disaster for the Russian troops. The Wallachs, instead of rising against the Turks, as promised by the political agents of the Balkan nations, remained loyal to the Sultan, and the Tatars of the Crimea delayed the Russian commissariat by an unexpected attack from the rear. After three days of

Warriors sent by Andrei Bogolyubski, Prince of Suzdal (1157-1174) against Novgorod.

Detail from an Ikon in the Church of the Holy Mother of God in Novgorod.

heroic and stubborn fighting on the part of his famished army Peter had to acknowledge himself beaten; and but for the astute behaviour of his comrade and friend, his wife Catherine, matters might have gone very ill with the Russians. She sacrificed all her jewellery, collected every bit of gold and jewellery in possession of the officers, and sent it as a present to the Turkish Grand Vizier. Peter authorised the envoy who was to hand over the presents to make peace at all costs short of surrendering the estuary of the Neva. The Grand Vizier showed himself generous and agreed to the withdrawal of the Russian army; the only stipulations being the surrender of Azov and Samara and the razing to the ground of the fortress Taganrog, recently built by the Russians.

By the time the Sultan and Charles XII. heard of these terms it was too late to make any effective objection to them. The Grand Vizier had, however, to pay for his generosity by exile, and the Treaty of "The Pruth" (1711) was only ratified owing to pressure brought to bear upon the Sultan by the European Powers.

All Europe seemed to be at war during these years, and rapid changes in political combinations turned the enemy of to-day into the ally of to-morrow, and *vice versa*. The period of 1700 to 1721 is like a kaleidoscope, which ultimately shapes itself into a picture of gain and glory for Russia but of apprehension for her Allies. Russia was becoming powerful, and the Western States began to look upon the hitherto despised barbaric Muscovy as a potential danger and menace to themselves. The last of Peter the Great's wars was undertaken in 1722 against Persia, resulting in the acquisition of Baku and the occupation of Daghestan, Ghilan, and Mazenderan, and during the last years of his life he did his best to extend his empire eastward.

During the first quarter of the eighteenth century Peter revisited Western Europe. In 1711 he did so to drink the waters at Carlsbad, and also to marry his son Alexei to the sister-in-law of the Austrian Emperor; and in 1717 he visited France with the object of arranging a marriage between his daughter Elizabeth and the young King of France

—a plan which came to naught, as the Duke of Orleans, the Regent, declined the alliance. As on his first visit to Europe, the Tsar studied art, commerce, science, and literature, discussing deep subjects with the great men at the Sorbonne and political matters with ministers of state. Although neither family nor political union was concluded, relations with France gradually became settled, and in 1721 the first permanent French Ambassador took up his residence in St Petersburg.

While in Paris Peter is reported to have embraced the statue of Richelieu and to have exclaimed: "O thou great man, if thou wert still alive I would present thee with one half of my dominions if only thou wouldst teach me how to rule the other half."

On his return journey from France news of family troubles vexed the Tsar: he received information of his son's flight from Austria, where that unworthy youth had taken refuge after severe altercations with his father. The latter had demanded from his heir either the amendment of his evil ways —his ill-treatment of his wife, and his machinations against his father's reforms—or his abdication. Instead of acting on this choice Alexei had fled to Austria, and at this juncture of the Tsar's European tour had now vanished from there. The unhappy father sent two confidential agents to search Europe for his contumacious son, who was finally tracked down at Castle St Elmo at Naples and brought back to St Petersburg.

In consequence of this affair the Tsar instituted in 1718 an inquiry which proved conclusively that during the last seven years the Old Russian party, in co-operation with the ex-Tsaritsa, had intrigued to frustrate his reforms, and that his heir had lent himself to their machinations. Severe judgment and punishment were meted out to all who had been implicated in this anti-reform movement: loss of property, flogging, and even the death-penalty were imposed upon the Tsar's secret enemies. His first wife, the nun, was convicted of having intrigued to raise her son Alexei to the throne, and also of illicit relations with a Boyar. The outraged Tsar and husband flogged her with his own hand,

and then shut her up for life in another nunnery. As to his son, a Council of one hundred and twenty-four secular judges found him guilty of high treason and condemned him to death, almost immediately after which the unhappy Tsarevitch suddenly died. Historians differ as to the manner of his death, but it is believed to have been in consequence of the tortures he had undergone.

That the father in Peter suffered intensely in treating his son thus has never been doubted; he felt he had no choice—his duty to his fatherland, the welfare of his people, came first. He knew that he exposed himself to the condemnation of men, but he comforted himself with the thought that "the Judge of all men would rightly estimate the motive of his action." This family tragedy was the keenest grief of the Tsar's life, for to have had in his lawful wife and heir the bitterest antagonists of his reforms was a perpetual pain, a draught of bitterness even in the sweetest hours of success.

All, however, that he had failed to find in Eudoxia he obtained from his second wife, who gave him devoted sympathy, full understanding, and whole-hearted co-operation in his work. The Tsar had met Martha Skavronskaya in 1703 in the house of his friend and minister Mentchikov, who was living with the Livonian peasant girl, a captive of war. She found favour in the Tsar's eyes, and being transferred to him, at his request, henceforth loved and served him with the whole-hearted devotion of a strong and simple nature. Wise in her own practical way, she proved herself a splendid comrade to her Imperial master. Her advice he gladly asked, while she tactfully refrained from ever pushing herself forward or interfering in politics. The union between the Tsar of All the Russias and the peasant girl from Livonia proved a perfect success. Love and friendship united the two, Peter's vehement nature being balanced by Martha's more equitable temperament. She was baptized into the Greek Church, receiving the name of Catherine, the Tsar himself acting as her godfather. In 1706 he had married her privately, but five years later he granted her official recognition as his legitimate wife. Later he publicly married her in the Cathedral of St Isaac, in

grateful recognition of her valiant and timely help on the occasion of his unsuccessful expedition against Turkey.

In 1714 the Tsar established the Order of St Catherine in honour of his wife, who had borne him eight children. Only one of her sons lived, and only two of her daughters: Anna, who married the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and Elizabeth, who remained single.

Peter won the rare honour of having his supereminent merits appreciated by contemporaries, and although their number at first was not large, their strong and loyal belief in him and his work has come to be shared by all who really know Russian history. Especially in the despatches of foreign ambassadors is this appreciation evident. The French Ambassador, Campredon, wrote: "The Tsar has set himself the task 'de changer entièrement du noir au blanc le génie, les mœurs et les coûtumes de sa nation.'" The same diplomatist testified that in pursuit of this end the Tsar was indefatigable in his efforts to master every branch of administration and to take a personal part in every deliberation of his ministers, conscious of his own more detailed and practical knowledge of affairs.

The Danish Ambassador to Russia wrote: "The Tsar towers above all the men of the Empire," and again: "The Tsar is a miracle of wisdom, keenness of thought, diligence, skill, and power of work. Without the assistance of experts he supplies his ministers with all the material needed for their deliberations, and works out plans as regards State and Church. He works daily for hours in the various departments with head and pen; there is no department in which he does not take a personal share."

Another ambassador, writing about a conversation with the Tsar, in which the latter complained of having to be a "Jack-of-all-trades," describes his versatility, and says that he was successful and skilful in everything to which he put his hand—whether quenching a fire, inventing a new gun, or arranging a list of toasts to be proposed at a festivity—for "whatever he does, he does with zeal and understanding; one might imagine that he had nothing else to do but the one thing on which he is engaged at the moment; while, in reality,

all the responsibilities of the State, the direction of military operations and of ecclesiastical affairs, are on his shoulders."

Another foreign contemporary wrote: "Should Peter die, then farewell to all science." The fame of the Tsar's power of application, of his marvellous energy and depth and versatility of thought, greatly impressed all those who came in contact with him. His indefatigable and thoughtful care for the welfare of his people can be traced in the vast number of documents and marginal notes written by the Tsar's own hand "in so distinct a handwriting and so clear a style that even a child can comprehend them." According to the same contemporary, "Il fit une création à la lettre"; even writing treatises as a guide for future reforms, in which he points out how and in what circumstances they should be inaugurated.

So gigantic a task as the Tsar had set himself obviously required assistance, and he succeeded in finding men able and willing, even if few in number, to support him. His earliest collaborators had been foreigners—François Lefort and the Scotsman Patrick Gordon, who taught him the principles of military and naval warfare, and who later occupied the positions of general and admiral. There were also the Admiral Cruys a Dutchman, Perry an Englishman, and the Germanised Scotsman Bruce, an honourable and therefore greatly respected man, who acted as head of the artillery department; besides several other capable men whom the genius of the Tsar had discovered and made use of to further his far-reaching schemes. In the realm of diplomacy it was Ostermann, the son of a German clergyman, whom Peter the Great trusted as possessing unerring political instinct; and it was to his skill that the favourable Treaty of Nystadt in 1721 was due. His moral character, however, was not above reproach.

Again, the Russian aristocracy supplied capable helpers, chief among whom was Field-marshal Boris Cheremetiev, who successfully assisted the Tsar in his military undertakings and fought his battles during the Northern War. This honourable and able military leader belonged to that section of Russian society which, some time before Peter's accession,

had favoured Western culture. There were also members of other old Russian families—the brothers Golitzin, Prince Dolgorouki, Counts Tolstoi, Golovin, Golovkin, Apraxin, and others. It was hard for these blue-blooded aristocrats to associate with parvenus, raised by the Tsar to rank and power, such as Mentchikov, who became his chief minister, or Yagoushinski, " the eye of the Tsar," his Chief Procurator, or Shafirov, a baptised Jew, who acted as Finance Minister. But Peter the Great made use of genius and talent wherever he found it, and the discovery of a man like Mentchikov, whose gifts, vitality, and virility were nearly on a par with those of his Imperial friend, justified the innovation.

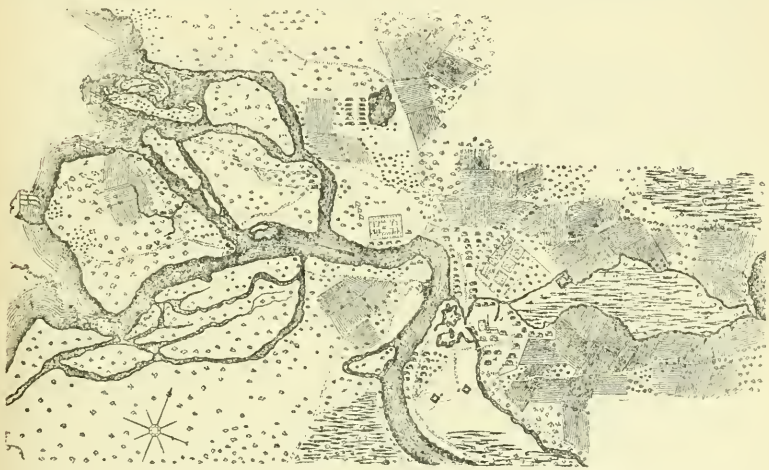
Mentchikov and Ostermann understood the Tsar perhaps better than any of his other collaborators ; the great gifts and power of Mentchikov especially were whole-heartedly expended in the service of his Imperial master, whose mind he knew, whose plans he furthered, and whose policy after the Tsar's death he was to carry on.

First among the clergy to uphold the Tsar was Dmitri Touptalo of Rostov, whom the Church has since canonised. A brilliant polemical writer, he fought with his pen for the reforms of the Tsar, upholding them as in no way contrary to the will and spirit of God. By his writings as well as by his discourses he confuted the accusation levelled against the Tsar by his enemies that he was Antichrist. He wrote a book on *The Signs of the Coming Antichrist*, proving that none of these could be applied to the Tsar, and his treatise on *The Image of God and Man's Likeness to Him* was directed against the Old Believers in their opposition to the Tsar's order about cutting the beard and shaving. Another ecclesiastical supporter was Theophal Prokopovitch, Metropolitan of Novgorod, a learned theologian, who on his arrival at Moscow from Kiev was aghast at the ignorance of clergy and laity, and at their puerile and sterile theological arguments.

Other supporters were Theophilact, Archbishop of Pskov, who acted as general apologist to the great reformer, and Stephan Yavorski, Metropolitan of Ryazan, who after the death of the last Patriarch occupied the position of " Guardian

of the Patriarchal Throne," and in his capacity of Director of the Ecclesiastical Academy did his utmost to raise the intellectual level of the clergy.

A rather unexpected defender of Peter's financial reforms arose in the person of Possotchov, a merchant, who in his treatise *Poverty and Riches* was the first to try and enlighten the Russian public on the principles of political economy. Mixed up with many wise and true ideas, such as the evil of serfdom, and the necessity for all to be equal in the eyes



Plan of the Estuary of the Neva (1698), showing Islands on which Peter the Great built his Capital.

of the law, were such quaint notions as that it was the Tsar's image and superscription alone which gave value to current coin, and that it would therefore be equally valuable if made of leather, so long as the image of the Tsar was stamped upon it.

In his zeal to acquire knowledge the Tsar learned from friend and foe. To him the defeat at Narva in 1700 had been "a blessing in disguise," for, as he put it, "necessity made us diligent and experienced." On the evening of the battle of Poltava he invited some captive Swedes to dinner, and drank the health of his "teachers." After the Treaty of Nystadt he wrote to General Apraxin:

"Pupils usually complete their studies in seven years; our schooling has lasted three times as long, but fortunately the result has been so good that it could not have been better." Ever ready to do all he could to fit himself for his gigantic task, nothing seemed too small and insignificant to know accurately. Peter would not have so thoroughly deserved and earned the title of "Great" if there had not been in him that primary element of all true greatness—humility: he recognised and honoured greatness where he met it, and endured contradiction and criticism from just and honest critics.

In contrast with the habits of his predecessors, who preferred to spend their lives in a semi-monastic existence of religious exercises requiring no effort, no expenditure of energy, Peter rejoiced in strenuous activity, and the key to his life may be found in the saying, "The soul's joy lies in doing." This also partly gives the clue to the opposition, whether secret or public, passive or active, with which the energetic reformer met. His people feared his methods. They had not yet reached that stage of mental development where reason is dominant; they could not see, for example, why they should be forced to cross the Neva in sailing-boats, as a consequence of which many unskilled in sailing were drowned, when they might have rowed across in safety. The Tsar, however, knew that unless he forced them to learn to sail they would never do so. What did the loss of a few lives matter to him, if only the principle of sailing were learned? To him human life was of little value if it stood in the way of his reforms or of the fulfilment of his plans: witness his building his new capital on the marshy land adjoining the estuary of the Neva.

It is easy to understand that his drastic measures hurt the susceptibilities of nearly every class of society. No one dared disobey him, but many longed for his death, desirous of retiring to their country houses or to Moscow, there to relax the strain to which the Tsar's strenuousness had subjected them and to relapse into the old comfortable *laissez faire* policy. Habits of indolence and sloth, traditions of ignorance and superstition, and old social customs *à la* Tatar

were all ruthlessly ignored by this modern, go-ahead Tsar. He was conscious of exciting hatred and opposition; but his energy and activity were stimulated to their utmost by the lurking fear that, unless he personally carried through his reforms and put them on a solid and lasting basis, his beautiful edifice of a Europeanised nation would collapse with his death. "Work while it is day" was the idea acting subconsciously as a spur to all his efforts; and so he did, with the result that his work was not undone after his death but served as the foundation for further development on the same lines.

When the long Northern War had been brought to a successful close in 1721 by the Peace of Nystadt, whereby the Baltic Provinces were ceded to Russia, and the "Russian Empire" had emerged out of Muscovite Russia, the Senate and the Synod offered to the Tsar the title of "Father of the Fatherland, Peter the Great, Emperor of All the Russias." After a solemn service in the cathedral the new dignity thus conferred upon him was proclaimed to the nation. From henceforth he was to be officially styled "Imperial Majesty."

The majority of the European Powers recognised the assumption of the new title, but the Austrian Emperor deeply resented a rival to his hitherto unique position. Peter, on his side, while he had refused the more ambitious title of "Emperor of the East," which had been suggested, reckoned himself the virtual successor of the Byzantine Emperors, and thus upheld the claim of his predecessors since the time of Ivan III.

In this same year Peter issued an ukase to the effect that the sovereign had the right of appointing as his successor whomsoever he liked. This arbitrary alteration of traditional custom greatly incensed the Old Russian party, which was hoping for his death and their consequent restoration to power as advisers to his grandson—a minor. Their fears were confirmed when, in 1727, he personally crowned his wife "Tsaritsa," thereby making the former serf-girl eligible to succeed him as ruler of Russia, without, however, formally appointing her his actual successor. The Conservative party

were aghast at this innovation, but the Tsar's will was and remained supreme. The question of the succession, however, was not settled and threatened to become acute, for the legitimate heir according to custom and precedent—Alexei, Peter's son by his first wife—had died, and soon after him Catherine's son Peter. Eventually, after three years, the autocratic ruler who had claimed the right to appoint his heir died without having nominated his successor.

The death of the Tsar came as a general surprise, for, although during the last years of his life he had not been in robust health, no one had expected his demise at the age of fifty-three. His iron constitution had, however, been undermined by violent excesses in drinking, which, helped by a habitual disregard for personal safety, led to his untimely death. And yet there is congruity in the direct and ultimate cause of Peter the Great's death with the conception and idea which ruled his life. The first servant of his people, their deliverer from the bondage and misery of the past, he spent his life in a restless pursuit of the aim he had set before himself, *i.e.* his nation's moral and economic welfare; and, as an incident consistent with this ideal, his death was due to the consequences of a truly humane act. Seeing a boat capsize in the Neva and some sailors struggling for their lives in the water, the Tsar jumped in after them, and at the risk of his own life saved the drowning men. He had hardly recovered from a severe illness, and the icy water gave him a chill which a few days later proved fatal. There are writers who criticise this act of rescue, making it a reproach to the Tsar that he thus sacrificed his life: they contend that he lacked the sense of proportion which ought to have told him that his life was of greater value to the nation than the lives of a few sailors. But surely it was a noble thing to do, even though he was an Emperor! It had become an ingrained habit with the Tsar to make sacrifices on behalf of his nation; and thus to "throw away" his life in the rescue of other lives came naturally to him. Peter died as he had lived, faithful to the ideal of duty, a man truly "Great," a ruler with a better right to this title than most kings and emperors of whom history speaks.

THE EMPIRE OF RUSSIA.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REFORMS OF PETER THE GREAT

In writing about the reforms of Peter the Great it is only fair to say that historians differ, according to their political convictions, as to their value, and, while agreed as to the greatness of his personality and ready to credit him with genius, they are greatly at variance in judging the results of his life-work. Those of the Slavophile school condemn his reforms wholesale, pre-Petrine Russia appearing to them perfect; while the school of "Westerners"—the present-day successors of men like Boris Godounov, Alexei Mikhailovitch, and Golitzin—consider Peter the saviour of his people.

Yet another point of view is presented by critics who agree that Muscovite Russia needed reform, but urge that the method of reform might have been wiser. Russia, they say, would have fared better had she been permitted to evolve gradually her own peculiar State organisation in harmony with her national characteristics, instead of having an alien form of government thrust upon her by force.

The goal Peter the Great set himself to reach was to ensure the safety of his country from external foes, while developing its internal prosperity. In domestic matters he realised that there was urgent need of a twofold emancipation—the people must be freed from the brutalising Tatarisation inherited from their Eastern conquerors, and the State must so far be secularised as to win release from the theocratic conceptions borrowed of old from Byzantium. This conviction influenced the Tsar in all his internal reforms, and indicates the basis upon which he built the new edifice of a modern European State; it explains his actions and accounts for the opposition

they aroused in the conservative centres of the nation, both lay and clerical.

Some critics consider that the State Peter laboured to bring into being was simply the expression of his own personality. What his nature craved for, they say, was absolute rule over a nation which was to be a merely colourless mass. He found his ideal practised in Sweden ; he therefore copied the organisation of that State, and thus introduced into Russia bureaucracy in addition to autocracy. In such a State there would be no use for individualities. The Russian nation however objected to being thus crushed into mere pulp. The opposition his reforms encountered was not always the expression of ignorance or a love of obscurantism : it represented at times a justifiable revolt against violence done to national feeling.

The renowned Russian historian Soloviev has coined a word which graphically expresses Peter's policy : " Povorot-k-zapadou," " the turning towards the West "—a conversion from the state of " Kitaism " or " Chinaism " to that of " Westernism." The Tsar's foreign policy broke down the wall of seclusion built up around his nation during the centuries of looking Eastward, which had resulted in a baneful isolation for the Russian Empire. Thanks to the purposeful and persistent efforts of Peter I., Russia now took her place among the great European Powers. It was in consequence of his internal reforms that his country was cleared of the Oriental and barbaric rubbish which had accumulated in the course of years.

The genius of the Tsar, his tremendous vitality, his practical knowledge of minute detail, his tireless activity, and his inexhaustible energy enabled him to undertake a task which could only have been faced by a Hercules ; and although Peter the Great did not succeed in completely cleansing the Augean stable of Tatarised Russia, he had opened the sluice-gates to let in the flood which was gradully to sweep away all that polluted his nation.

The motive power of the Tsar's life and activity was love for his people and the desire to bestow on them the many benefits they so sorely lacked. His methods of procuring

their welfare were more drastic than the recipients of the unsought-for blessings approved; but the Tsar felt himself a man who had to carry out a gigantic undertaking in a limited space of time, and to take short-cuts was the only possible way of reaching the goal within the time at his disposal.

It is worth while to try and realise some of the tremendous odds against which the great reformer had to contend. The first was his isolation—his lack of native collaborators,—and how keenly he felt this handicap can be seen in his letters to his faithful comrade Catherine, his second wife.

Peter had practically to create his helpers—had to infuse men with his own enthusiasm—had to impress them not only with the desirability but also with the feasibility of his schemes for reform. He succeeded in raising helpers, two of whom—the most congenial to his spirit—after his death carried on his policy, which otherwise would have been submerged by the stream of reaction, obscurantism, and bitter hatred which had been kept in check during his lifetime.

How radically Peter's methods differed from the traditional is demonstrated by the personalities of these fellow-workers: instead of being descendants of ancient Boyar families, they were simply parvenus. Ostermann, the son of a German clergyman, became his Foreign Minister; and Mentchikov, erstwhile baker's boy, a vendor of pasties, was made admiral, general, home secretary, and finally a prince of the realm. The Tsar had met him in the house of François Lefort, and, discerning latent possibilities and great gifts in the young man, took a fancy to him and drew him into his circle.

It was this knowledge of human nature, this insight into character, which enabled Peter to pick and choose the right helpers for the building up of his great edifice. It was not as if this great master-builder had clear ground on which to work: his task was to pull down, to destroy, to root up and to clear away the débris of the old before he could create his new building. It cannot be wondered at that there was a great crash when this demolition took place, and that the dust then raised might well have choked a less robust physique. When, for instance, love of his country

and patriotism, as opposed to paternal love, constrained him to remove the Tsarevitch Alexei as a dangerous obstruction, and also when many Boyar families had to be ruthlessly punished for intriguing against his reforms, serious trouble resulted. Not unnaturally the Boyars objected to the rise of parvenus to power, influence, and rank: they also resented the abolition of the old order of the nobility, which was now being superseded by one in which rank was conferred as a reward for service to the State. It was a radical change, but Peter I. acted on the principle that responsibility and privilege were correlative.

So busy a bee as the Tsar had no use for drones in his hive; he himself set an example of work, making personal sacrifices for the welfare of his nation, and therefore felt justified in demanding the same from those favoured by conditions of birth.

Peter introduced a graduated scale of service: the Russian nobles had to serve the State in some capacity or other; in the army for a minimum of seven years, in the civil service for ten years, in any commercial or industrial capacity for fifteen years. Those who would not work were harmful to the general welfare, and therefore the only way to make them innocuous was to deprive them of their land and even to deny them the right of marriage. But to those who did their share, the way to power and riches stood open. To prevent the impoverishment of his landed gentry, and also to induce the younger sons to enter State service, Peter introduced the law of inheritance by entail.

The other important pillar of the old edifice which the Tsar demolished, only to rebuild under another capital, was the Church.

Peter the Great knew full well what an important rôle had been played by such clever Patriarchs as his great-grandfather Philaret and, during the reign of his father, by the Patriarch Nikon. It was incompatible with his new conception of the State and with his position as Autocrat of All the Russias that he should run the risk of allowing any head of the Church to assume such power; when, therefore, the office of Patriarch fell vacant, the Tsar delayed making a

fresh appointment. As a temporary measure he created a new ecclesiastical office, that of "Guardian of the Patriarchal Throne," which he replaced in 1721 by the "Holy Synod." His idea was that a representative body of men would safeguard the spiritual interests of the nation more effectively than any one man, the ignorant populace being apt to consider such a single official as a second Tsar, whose action they would uphold and support in the belief that they were thereby ranging themselves on the side of God.

The duties of this new ecclesiastical body were outlined by the Tsar himself, and if they had only been faithfully carried out would have proved a blessing to the nation. These duties were : to combat superstition, to suppress the worship of spurious relics, and to spread the knowledge of the Gospel by means of the printed Word and education. To enable the Synod to do its work with authority, the Tsar granted it the right of promulgating ukasi. At first some really good work was done, especially in altering the conditions under which men were admitted to the priesthood, and also in raising the low moral tone of the clergy.

Not less drastic were the Tsar's actions with regard to monastic communities, which he refrained from totally abolishing only because of the necessity for a supply of bishops, who were always elected from among monks. The census of 1722 proved that in these monastic establishments 14,534 men and 10,673 women were shirking social responsibilities as regards the increase of the population, and also that the immense possessions owned by nunneries and monasteries were so much dead capital. To turn these properties to economic advantage the Tsar not only taxed them heavily, but also put them under Governmental administration, and, apportioning a fixed sum for the support of the monks and nuns, he confiscated the surplus towards the education of the people.

But even this was not sufficient for the Imperial Reformer : these drones had to be coerced into productive activity—he forced them to manage and keep up hospitals and schools, and also to care for disabled soldiers. It is hardly to be wondered at that a feeling of keen resentment, developing

into bitter hatred, was thus engendered in the monastic world. Monks, priests, and nuns hated the Tsar for the drastic way in which he turned their indolence into energy. But Peter believed in work—believed "that man ought to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow."

In spite of the unbridled licentiousness of the Tsar's personal life, he seems to have had a very clear perception of spiritual truth, and therefore he desired a more thorough religious instruction for his nation. He hated hypocrisy—to him religion and morality were synonymous; he wished his people to be taught what was real and true, and this could only be attained by means of spiritual and mental enlightenment.

Peter realised the appalling religious ignorance of the people, as did the Danish Ambassador, who wrote that in Russia adults knew less of religion than children of three years in Denmark. The Tsar insisted on a more intelligent worship, and commanded the people to attend church every Sunday and on all holidays, but there was also political wisdom in this order, as all ukasi had to be read in the churches. He altered the traditional religious values, and taught that to do one's work on earth well was of greater merit than to excel in the outward forms of worship, whether of God in ritual or of the Tsar by a servile prostration before him, as was the custom since the Tatar days. In one of his writings he says: "If equal honour is accorded to the Tsar and to God, what difference is there then between the two? Let there be less cringing and more whole-hearted service, more sincerity, more honesty towards me and my Empire. That is the honour which is due to the Tsar—not prostrations!" Also that "not the outward observance of ritual and fasting but the inward attitude of humility and contrition" was the right means of approaching God.

The clergy were incensed against the Tsar, not only by his social and educational reforms, but especially by his personal attitude towards the rules of the Church—his disregard of the prescribed fasts, etc. In his character and manner of life Peter the Great presented a perfectly new type of Tsar, absolutely different from his predecessors, in whom the theo-

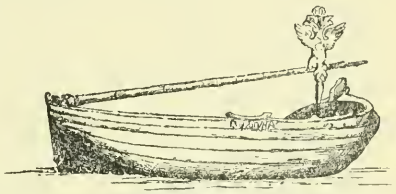
cratic element seemed to have overshadowed the administrative, while Peter's virile nature rebelled against asceticism. In an ecclesiastical indictment against him this fact was thus described: "What a difference between this Tsar and his predecessors! The former undertook pilgrimages to monasteries for purposes of prayer and devotion, while this one visits the 'German suburb' of Moscow!"

The secularisation of the Church, which Peter had brought about by the abolition of the Patriarchate and by the creation of the Holy Synod, had offended the clergy; nevertheless the Church in speaking for herself also voiced the people's opposition to his reforms. The monks who from their cells wrote pamphlets against the Tsar as Antichrist had apparent facts to offer in support of their belief. The change which perhaps most upset the ignorant people, both lay and clerical, was the Tsar's alteration of the calendar, for up to that time the year had been reckoned as dating from the creation of the world, beginning from the first of September (when apples were ripe!). It is a pity that Peter adopted the Julian instead of the Gregorian calendar, for thus, ever since, his country has lagged several days behind the rest of Europe. This change of the calendar was considered proof positive that "the years of the Lord had passed," and "that the reign of Satan had begun." Again, with regard to the command to shave, had not God made man in His own image? Were not God the Father and God the Son always depicted in the ikons with long beards? Was it not unchristian to compel men to shave and cut off their beards and thus efface the likeness of God? The little cross, too, that was branded on the left hand of recruits (to prevent desertion), was it not surely the "mark of the beast"? When, in addition to shaving, short coats and smoking became the order of the day, the opinion held by the ignorant masses was confirmed. Splitting the nose had been the punishment meted out by the Tsar's father for smoking, and here was the son actually legalising such a heathen practice!

The Church was scandalised by these innovations, and it deeply resented the religious toleration the Tsar extended to foreigners, as well as his lenient attitude towards Russian

sectarians. Peter, however, persisted in this policy, for he knew that unless he guaranteed religious liberty to the many foreigners whom he had invited and drawn into Russia, he could not expect men worth having to settle in his dominions. He therefore granted them freedom and every facility for worship ; he even gave them grants of land in his new capital for the erection of their churches, but he prohibited any attempt at proselytising.

On his journeys abroad the Tsar frequently visited churches of other creeds, and this again was a scandal to his co-religionists. On one occasion in Poland, when asked to use his influence to bring about a union between the two Catholic Churches, the Tsar wisely replied : "It is true that God has given princes power over people, but over the consciences of people Christ alone rules, and a union of Churches can come about only by the will and action of God."



THE "GRANDFATHER OF THE RUSSIAN NAVY."
(The Little English boat which inspired Peter the Great to build his navy.)

In regard to the schismatic Old Believers, who had been so violently persecuted during his father's reign, he followed a policy of *laissez faire*. He told the Church that kindness was a better way of reclaiming the erring than persecution; that if people could not be persuaded by means of reason, they would not change their faith for fire and sword ; besides this, he would not increase their national importance by making martyrs of them.

The Tsar's compelling energy proved a strain on the more indolent and phlegmatic members of the aristocracy, and he knew that unless he established his reforms on a secure basis, they would collapse on his death. The spread of education was the means he employed to prevent this threatened calamity. It was this attempt at compulsory education which chiefly offended the sensibilities of his people : his views on the matter were diametrically opposed to those of the clergy—the guardians of Russia's salvation and integrity—and his few ecclesiastical supporters hailed from Kiev, where progressive

Latin influences predominated. While to the Tsar science was the jemmy which was to break open the lock of the iron gates behind which his nation had been kept for centuries in utter darkness, all its latent treasures of mind and soul hidden from sight, to his opponents science was merely an instrument of the Evil One.

The Oriental habit of *dolce far niente* hitherto prevalent in Russia had inevitably led to mental stagnation. Out of this state of inaction the powerful hand of the great master mind wished to draw his people with one mighty pull; he therefore sent young noblemen abroad to study science, and insisted upon education for the children of Government officials. All servants of the State were forced to have their children educated; for unless they were able to read and write, or had mastered a craft the acquisition of which had occupied their time too fully to admit of book-learning, they were prohibited from marrying. Illiterate sons of priests were made soldiers for life.

The Tsar set up several printing-presses, which turned out innumerable school-books; and in order to facilitate literacy the Tsar himself simplified the Slavonic alphabet, and by making certain omissions, alterations, and additions, he created the present Russian script. With keen interest he watched over the production of the first book in this simplified lettering, correcting the proofs with his own hands. In his zeal for education he created an Academy of Science even before any of his schools were founded.

The great German savant Leibnitz, whose advice the Tsar followed in matters scientific, encouraged him to have geographical researches made; consequently explorations into unknown parts of Siberia were undertaken and scientific expeditions made, one of which resulted in the discovery of the Behring Straits, which had once been visited by a Cossack, Denis Disjnev, in 1642.

The Tsar also commanded the systematic collection of natural history specimens, of rare documents, etc. He took a personal interest in the compilation of a history of Russia, had many books translated into Russian, and by every means fostered intellectual culture. It became the fashion among

the wealthier nobles to have their children instructed by foreign tutors and governesses. Thus gradually the mental lethargy of ages was shaken off. Those who had been sent abroad for their studies showed themselves adaptable and speedily acquired European manners and methods which, on their return, they introduced into their own homes.

This sudden spread of education among the nobility created entirely new conditions. The mental homogeneity of the Russian nation was broken up, for until Peter, by sheer force, dragged his aristocracy and his officials into enlightenment the whole nation was on the same dead level of ignorance. Hitherto master and serf, mistress and "waiting woman," had been separated from one another by economic conditions only, and not by difference in culture. Now, however, a differentiation began which rapidly developed into great educational progress for the upper classes, while the masses were left in their former deplorable state of ignorance.

The reforms of Peter the Great influenced nearly every sphere of national and political life, yet he left the basis of all national welfare—the peasantry—practically untouched. All he did for them was to pass certain laws which were intended to ameliorate their lot, such as the prohibition of the sale of serfs apart from the land on which they lived, and of the selling separately of individual members of a family —laws which were often evaded. On the other hand, he increased their master's power over them by instituting the system of passports, thanks to which escaped serfs could be more easily caught and returned to their owners.

He did not change the old village organisation of the Mir, although he introduced individual taxation by "soul," as male serfs came to be designated, instead of by "community."

Of the Russian peasants the French Ambassador wrote: "Serfdom and tyranny have robbed them of the capacity to work sensibly and well so as to try and better their condition." Centuries of exploitation, cruelty, and selfishness on the part of the masters had given the people their belief embodied in the proverb that "Heaven is high and the Tsar far away"—that there was no help of redress for them.

The only excuse for this omission on the part of the

Imperial master-builder is the fact that, in his haste to construct a wonderful edifice, he gave more time to the erection of the pillars than to the foundation, which urgently required laying.

Two important pillars—the Church and the nobility—Peter succeeded in reconstructing ; two others—the army and the navy—he had to build up from their very foundation. Whereas in 1696 he had been able to lead only four regiments against Azov, at the end of his reign his army numbered 210,000 infantry, with ten cavalry regiments, and 109,000 Cossacks. The Tsar had come to realise that the "armed men," which up till then were all that Russia had been able to put into the field, could not expect to fight successfully with the trained soldiers of the European Powers. He therefore abolished the Streltzi and the other military bodies hitherto employed by the State, and introduced an army of conscripts who had to sign on for life; and strict rules as to the manner of recruiting were issued by the Tsar. Officers were either to be trained at home as cadets in the Guards or sent abroad to join foreign armies on active service for practical study in strategy.

With regard to the navy his success was beyond all expectation. The English sailing-boat which had been the means of arousing his curiosity and interest in shipbuilding inspired him to construct a fleet, which at the end of his reign consisted of twelve hundred galleys and ships of the line, manned by twenty thousand sailors. His naval officers were trained abroad or in the Naval College he established in St Petersburg. Here, under the directorship of a Frenchman, with a staff of English teachers, the naval cadets were instructed.

In every department Peter carried out the following wise scheme :—expert foreigners were given the position of guiding and controlling advisers, with a Russian as ostensible head and Russians as subordinates. In this way the national susceptibilities were not offended : the hated foreigner was kept in the background, and only instructed and advised the Russians how to act for themselves. This system proved very successful, the second generation being in most cases able to dispense with foreign assistance.

The prevalent animosity to foreigners as such was a sign of the Orientalisation of the Russian nation, and during his reign the Tsar put down in a drastic manner several anti-foreign riots, such as take place in China to this day.

Peter created the Senate, whose function it was to act as supreme tribunal, to see to the general welfare of the country, and to assist the Tsar in the administration of the realm. He abolished the Council of the Boyars and replaced it by this permanent body of appointed Senators, whose duty it was to find sources of revenue for the army, as well as to provide for an increase of its personnel; further, the Senate was to act as intermediary between the Tsar and the newly created Governors of provinces, who replaced the former Voyevods.

For the better administration of the realm he copied the Swedish system of Government departments or "Colleges," which, however, owing to the lack of efficient natives, had to be presided over at the start by foreigners, and even by Swedish prisoners of war. Such was the irony of fate!

Civic life, too, had to be placed on a sounder basis, and municipal reforms, modelled on German lines, were introduced. The urban population was divided into three classes: the first included merchants, physicians, chemists, engineers, and shipbuilders; the second, shopkeepers and artisans; and the third consisted of all the people who did not come under any of these descriptions. Peter also introduced guilds for the better regulation of arts and crafts, and for the artisans "trade corporations."

In the sphere of finance, too, Peter made various changes: to the silver currency were added gold and copper, and the Oriental habit of cutting or scooping silver out of the coins was prohibited. In order to increase the revenue of his impoverished Empire the Tsar reorganised its fiscal system: he abolished all exemption from taxes hitherto enjoyed by certain privileged classes and individuals, and introduced direct taxation; he imposed a heavy duty on foreign luxuries, but, very wisely, none on raw material.

Anxious to create new sources of wealth, as well as to utilise those already existing, the Tsar urged upon his ministers the

necessity for developing commerce and industry, with the satisfactory result that two hundred factories were established during his reign. To stimulate the mining industry many new mines were opened in Siberia and elsewhere, while owners of land in which minerals were known to exist were flogged and even threatened with the death penalty if they would not exploit their mineral wealth.

For agriculture Peter was not able to do so much, but he commanded the scythe to be used instead of the sickle, and introduced vines, mulberry trees, and the tobacco plant. He also encouraged systematic breeding of horses and cattle.

Agricultural, commercial, and industrial enterprise, however, required greater facilities for communication than existed at the time. Accordingly, the far-seeing monarch planned a system of canals by which the White Sea and the Gulf of Finland, the Black Sea and the Caspian, were to be united.

Unfortunately, there was constant leakage from the treasury, due to the dishonesty of the officials, and to put an end to this the Tsar used violent measures; for instance, informers against such offenders were promised the official position of the culprit, a policy which created a demoralising system of espionage. The Tsar also appointed a "Fiscal Chief," whose duty it was to safeguard the revenue by waging war against the appalling corruption rife amongst officials of every grade. The most flagrant example was that of Prince Gagarin, Governor of Siberia, who had not only monopolised the trade with China, but had bribed his subordinates to support him in his corrupt practices: even Senators and members of the "Colleges" were implicated in this scandal.

Against so deep-rooted and far-spread an evil only the severest punishment could prove effectual, and, although Gagarin confessed his misdeeds, offering to resign and spend the remainder of his life in a monastery, he was executed as a warning to others. Perhaps the greatest cause of corruption was the fact that little or no salary had hitherto been paid to the Government officials; extortion was thus their only means of securing a livelihood—indeed, it was actually reduced to a system which was called "Kormlenie" or "process of nourishing."

How deeply the Tsar felt these abuses is apparent from his instruction to the Minister of Finance commanding the issue of an ukase to the effect that any official found stealing even as much as would buy a rope was to be hanged. The minister's reply illustrates existing conditions: "Sire, do you really want to be a ruler without servants or subjects? We all steal. The only difference is that some do it less openly than others!"

The task of the "Fiscal Chief" was indeed a gigantic one, and if he employed barbarous methods it can hardly excite wonder.

All these economic and administrative measures, introduced for the purpose of increasing and safeguarding the national income, resulted in an increase of revenue, which during the years 1710–1725 rose from three million to ten million roubles.

The genius of Peter led him to see clearly that his reforms could not be carried out except by men of higher culture than Russia at that time was able to produce. Yet although political and administrative systems could be reorganised by imported helpers, the moral life of the nation could develop only in course of time: it was possible for the Tsar to create industry and commerce by means of ukasi, he could not by any order, however stringent, create an upright *personnel.* He did his utmost to eradicate corruption and bribery, yet even his friend and favourite Mentchikov was not blameless in this respect.

In order to ensure the safety of unarmed citizens Peter established a regular police force, whose duty it was to put down the robbers who infested the streets of his towns; but when even noblemen had to be prevented from acting as highwaymen, it was moral regeneration, not police regulation, which was wanted.

The Tsar realised that more was required for the healthy development of a nation than merely military and administrative organisation; he felt that the family and social life of his people was in equal need of his careful attention.

Russian society had hitherto been based on the Oriental plan of the separation of the sexes in public life, and was therefore suffering from the evils inherent in such an un-

natural system. Marriage customs were in harmony with the low conception of morality. After a match had been arranged by the professional go-between, the prospective bride had to pass a minute physical inspection, a custom which was open to abuse; it happened not infrequently that at this inspection a different girl was substituted for the real bride, who might be deformed or much older, and whom the bridegroom saw for the first time after the marriage ceremony. Peter altered this custom by a law which made it compulsory for the betrothed to meet each other every day for six weeks, either party being at liberty to dissolve the engagement at the end of this period if he or she wished.

He also abolished the inhuman practice of killing deformed and illegitimate children.

The Oriental system had been as fatal to the men as to the women, Russian men had become coarse, brutal, and licentious. In order to change all this and to create and foster a normal social life such as the Tsar had witnessed in foreign countries, he organised so-called "Assemblies." These social gatherings, to which the nobles were obliged to bring their wives and daughters, were arranged by the Tsar and by the chief of police, and took place at various private houses in St Petersburg. At these parties card-playing was prohibited, but other games, such as draughts and chess, were encouraged. Dancing was especially favoured by the Tsar; he had learned that art while abroad, and now taught it personally to his aristocracy.

With the introduction of Western social life went the adoption of Western clothing; by order of the Tsar the loose, flowing Oriental garments were replaced by the rococo costume—even the ordinary citizen was obliged to shorten his coat to the knee. In his political pamphlet, *The Right of the Monarch's Will*, Prokopovitch, the apologist of Peter the Great, contends that the Tsar had the right to alter "every rite, civil and religious; every custom, whether in the wearing of dresses or in the building of houses; every kind of ceremony and prescribed form at festivities, nuptials, burials, etc. . . ."

The coercive methods by means of which the Tsar transformed the social customs of his nobility had the desired

effect: they created a perfectly new atmosphere—the fresh air of progress and culture found free entrance into the hitherto airtight compartments of Russian society. He released the victims from their Oriental chains and set them free by his word of authority.

The reforms of Peter the Great, influencing as they did every sphere of the nation's life, were not drawn up according to a clearly defined plan, but were introduced as necessity arose. Some were the logical outcome of a previous reform, others were sprung upon the people suddenly and without warning. Many of his foreign contemporaries at that time in Russia realised that most of the Tsar's reforms were the natural outcome of his military experiences; for the external security and the internal prosperity of his country were interdependent—upon both of them rested Russia's position as a world Power.

The English engineer Perry, who spent sixteen years in Russia, clearly perceived this close connection between the foreign policy and the internal reforms of the Tsar. He wrote that "defeat instead of victory at Poltava would have resulted in a revolution which would have forced the Tsar to give up all thought of reform and to let the Russian people relapse into their former state of ignorance and superstition; he would have been compelled to expel all foreigners, as the Russians could not endure them."

Although the reforms of Peter the Great excite genuine admiration, they also call forth criticism, especially as to the manner in which they were introduced; but it is impossible for any man to accomplish so much in the short period of thirty-three years without exposing himself to severe criticism. The reforms of the Tsar were like his nature—quick, decisive, drastic, often even revolutionary though introduced by the Autocrat of All the Russias.

His programme was not contrary to the principles held in the abstract by his immediate predecessors. His father and grandfather, and still earlier Boris Godounov and the pseudo-Dmitri, had begun to turn their gaze Westwards, and certain members of the Russian aristocracy, such as the great Golitzin, his sister's adviser, had strongly favoured a

rapprochement with Western Europe. But this in no way lessens the tremendous importance of Peter's activity. Even if some of his measures only carried on and developed what had before existed in embryo, still there is a fundamental difference between the purely theoretical interest taken by the father in certain matters and the personal practical execution of them by the son. For example, the Tsar Alexei went no further in his desire for a fleet than to order an English sailing-boat as model and to build one ship, the *Eagle*; it was his son who actually created the navy.

However open to criticism Peter's reforms may have been, as too superficial in some instances or too drastic in others, yet he did transform Russia from a negligible half-Asiatic State into a European Power.

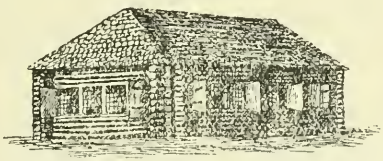
The people groaned and the nobles chafed under his high-handed measures: many cherished illusions were shattered and many vested interests attacked, but the fact remains that he succeeded in establishing reforms which effectually prevented his people from sinking back into the state in which he had found them. While rescuing a man who is fast sinking in a quagmire, the rescuer cannot be over-particular about his grip—he may pull out some handfuls of hair or inflict a bruise in extricating the helpless one from a perilous position; nor must he be blamed if mud still clings to the sufferer whom he has dragged into safety by sheer force.

It was impossible for Peter the Great to lift his people out of the morass of Tatarisation into which the Mongol rule had plunged them without doing some harm, it was not his fault if the Russian nation, even after his energetic handling, still retained traces of barbarism in its habits and manners.

There can be no doubt as to the national importance of Peter the Great: friend and foe alike accord his genius the fullest recognition. To give unqualified praise to his personal character is unfortunately impossible, for, as a German contemporary expressed it, "He is a very good man and a very bad man!" In a word, he had all the vices of his virtues, and, although in many ways in advance of his time, he was after all the product of that ancient Russia whose unbridled licentiousness horrified the more self-restrained

foreigners. The excesses of Peter's life, the barbaric manner in which he compelled people to drink spirits, his attacks of fury, excite disgust, and his ruthless treatment of opponents and intriguers cannot fail to horrify. The national coarseness and brutality were only too apparent in this great reformer, who did his utmost to change his nation, while himself he could not change.

It should be no reproach that he was not always successful, that his hasty reforms only covered the upper classes with a kind of social veneer. The marvel is that Peter the Great accomplished as much as he did, for he attempted in three decades what it had taken other nations centuries to attain. His failings and excesses were temporary—they ended with his life, his ideals and achievements remain for all time, and their influence will be felt as long as the Russian nation exists. Their last ruler of purely Slav extraction, he set his people an example of industry, activity, and personal devotion to an ideal. The first servant of his subjects, his life was spent "in labours more abundant."



THE ORIGINAL HOUSE OF PETER THE GREAT IN ST PETERSBURG.

CHAPTER IX

EMPRESSES, REGENTS, AND FAVOURITES

(1725–1762)

Although Peter the Great had not appointed an heir, his friends and ministers settled the question even before he had breathed his last, and the moment after his death, his wife Catherine was proclaimed, not Regent on behalf of her late husband's grandson, but Empress in her own right. This was a tremendous blow to the Old Russian party, which had hoped for a reversion of policy under the regency of Peter's divorced wife, the nun, on behalf of her grandson Ivan, a lad of eight years. But Catherine enjoyed the support of official Russia as represented by the men whom Peter the Great had raised to power, whose interest lay in carrying on his ideas.

Chief among them were Prince Mentchikov and Baron Ostermann, who, although enemies to each other, showed a united front to the Boyar party. The army also wholeheartedly acclaimed Catherine as Empress: the soldiers loved their great leader's valiant comrade; to them she was a real soldier's wife, one whom they could understand and appreciate.

During the two years of Catherine's reign (1725–1727) Mentchikov reached the zenith of his career. Its only blot was his boundless greed, but for which the all-powerful minister ruled Russia wisely on behalf of his Imperial mistress. These two—the erstwhile vendor of patties, and Catherine, the serf girl, nurserymaid to a pastor's children, then captive of war of Field-marshal Cheremetiev, from whom she was taken by Mentchikov and ultimately passed on to the Tsar

—these two parvenus ruled Russia together for two years, faithfully carrying on the policy of their common friend and protector.

Of all Peter's many friends these two were his nearest and dearest, and the keen connoisseur of character was not disappointed in those he had raised to such a height. The illiterate captive of war did not only momentarily take the Tsar's fancy with her good looks at the age of seventeen or eighteen ; it was her tact, shrewdness, common sense, and insight into human nature which permanently endeared her to her lord. She knew how to manage his untamed nature ; she entered intelligently into all his interests, sharing all his plans and work ; in a word, she made a perfect companion for the Great Tsar.

The only change the Empress introduced during her reign was the abolition of the prefix " governing " in the titles of Senate and Synod, vesting all authority in the High Privy Council, composed of her late husband's fellow-workers and presided over by herself.

The unpleasant fact must be recorded that the Empress's reign came to an untimely end through dropsy brought on by excessive drinking. Her great minister's career was longer by only a few more months.

During her reign she drew various members of her family, simple Livonian peasants, into the Court, made her sisters and brothers-in-law counts, and arranged marriages for their children. On her death-bed she appointed the grandson of Peter the Great, Peter Alexeievitch, as her successor ; but he was to rule under the regency of a Council, which was to consist of her two daughters, Anna and Elizabeth, the husband of the former, the Grand Duke of Holstein, and the members of the High Privy Council. By this arrangement the claims of the two great factions were to be reconciled. The hitherto omnipotent minister Mentchikov, or " The Prince," as he was called, took good care to keep the young Tsar well under his eye : he made him live with him in his own palace, and forced him to become engaged to his daughter, who was several years his senior. In his unbridled ambition Mentchikov went so far as to sign his letters to

Peter II. simply "your father," in anticipation of the Tsar's becoming his son-in-law.

Peter II. (1727–1730) was of a different temperament and disposition from his father, the unhappy Tsarevitch Alexei, to whom theological arguments and a dreamy existence had appealed more than reality and activity, while his son was manly and enjoyed sport and all military exercises. This naturally independent nature was supported in rebellion against the strict guardianship of "The Prince" by his favourite sister Natalia and his merry young aunt Elizabeth, and also by his tutor, the great diplomatist of Peter the Great's reign—Baron Ostermann.

Mentchikov's avarice, in addition to his unwise treatment of the Tsar, led to his downfall. The boy Tsar, exasperated by a counter order of his minister, suddenly asserted his authority, and by a *coup d'état* the Prince was deprived of his power, his immense fortune of twelve million roubles confiscated, and he himself banished to his estate in the province of Ryazan. All the vexation endured in the past by the young Tsar now found expression in his treatment of the ex-minister. Mentchikov, with his whole family, was exiled to Siberia, where an allowance of ten roubles (about twenty shillings) a day was all they were given for subsistence.

In exile the moral greatness of Peter's friend and fellow worker, lowered as it had been by the exercise of unlimited power, showed itself again. There in Siberia he worked as a carpenter, as he had done side by side with his great master in Holland long ago ; he built himself a little wooden church, in which were buried, in 1729, the remains of one of the most striking personalities of his time.

With the fall of Mentchikov a period of palace revolutions, of cabals and intrigues set in. In wearying succession of plot and counterplot great Russian families rise to power only to be replaced for a time by more successful rivals. It seemed as if the great reformer's lifework might be swept away by those currents which whirled around the edifice of empire raised by his genius. The young Tsar, however, only changed masters when he banished Mentchikov, for the powerful family of the Dolgorouki, the ex-minister's bitter enemies,

took the reins into their own hands. They arranged and tried to hurry him into a marriage with Catherine Dolgorouki, but this arrangement the young Tsar rejected. Though they indulged his tastes in every way, their persistent supervision became a weariness to him, and when, therefore, they committed the tactical mistake of restraining the expenditure of the Tsar's beloved aunt Elizabeth, their downfall was decided upon and was only averted by the death of Peter II., the last male representative of the Romanoffs, who was carried off by smallpox.

The only other direct representatives of this dynasty were: Elizabeth, Peter the Great's daughter, his grandson Peter (son of his deceased daughter Anna of Holstein-Gottorp), and the two married daughters of his elder brother Ivan—Anna, Duchess of Courland, and Catherine, Duchess of Mecklenburg.

The evil consequences resulting from the abrogation of the former laws of succession by Peter the Great now became apparent: these ladies of the house of Romanoff could all claim equal rights to the throne through their common grandfather, the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovitch. Russian public opinion, however, wavered between Peter's grandson, the young Duke of Holstein, and the great Tsar's daughter Elizabeth, whose sunny nature and *bonhomie* made her a general favourite.

Before a decision was arrived at, the High Privy Council framed, and attempted to establish in Russia, as in Poland, an oligarchy with an elected monarch as figurehead. Ignoring the more direct heirs of Peter's line, they approached the Duchess of Courland as representative of the line of his elder brother Ivan. The Privy Council, now composed entirely of men of the anti-reform party, offered her the crown of Russia if she would agree to eight conditions. Some of these would have greatly benefited the nation, for instance that no subject should be punished nor his property confiscated until after a regular procedure in the courts of justice. The document embodied a kind of constitution, in imitation of that of England. Yet the promoters of the "oligarchical republic" aimed not at progress but at re-

action. They longed to change the capital back to Moscow. St Petersburg, with all it stood for—army, navy, foreign relations—was to be relegated to the background and the old régime would flourish once more.

The choice of Anna Ivanovna as Empress was opposed by all who realised that Russia's security was jeopardised by a return to pre-Petrine conditions; she also had the clergy and the lesser nobility against her. Nevertheless, the crown was offered to her, and she accepted it with all conditions attached, including even the proviso that she would forfeit the crown of Russia if she did not keep all the conditions to which she had set her signature. Accompanied by eight regiments, she entered Moscow and was crowned in the Kremlin.

With the assistance of the Metropolitan, who had warned her that under the new arrangements the Crown would be robbed of authority and would come under the domination of the Golitzins and Dolgoroukis, she succeeded in duping everybody. Neither the reform party nor the lesser nobles but the absolutist party gained the day, and Anna was proclaimed Autocrat of All the Russias.

For ten years (1730–1740) this hard-featured, deep-voiced woman ruled over Russia, gaining by her fiendish cruelty the name of "Anna the Bloody." Against those who tried to curtail her prerogative or who had opposed her accession to the throne her revenge was simply feline. She enjoyed torturing her adversaries by meting out punishment in small doses: deposition from office, confiscation of property, banishment, and not seldom mutilation, would follow in grim succession. Two hundred thousand condemnations for political offences are recorded for this decade (1730–1740), and Siberia became the place of abode for many of the highest Russian aristocrats. Anna seems to have taken Ivan the Terrible as her model, and in her hands brutality became a fine art.

The Empress was encouraged in her coarse and wicked life by her lover, Biron. She had raised him, the grandson of a groom, to the position of Chamberlain, and after the death of the last Duke of Courland she succeeded in investing

her low-born lover with that title. The Baltic nobility, who had spurned the parvenu and refused to acknowledge him as an equal, were now forced to elect him as their Duke.

The Empress made St Petersburg once more the capital and created a "Cabinet" on the German model, filling her Court with Germans, who were readily welcomed by the late Tsar Peter's two eminent German collaborators, Ostermann and Münich. The former used all his influence to weaken the alliance with France and to draw Russia into a closer union with Austria—which country, he maintained, was better able to assist Russia against Poland and Turkey. For the Polish question had by this time become acute, and France was favouring Stanislav Lesczynski, while Russia was supporting the candidature of his rival, August of Saxony.

Russia, at the cost of surrendering her Persian possessions acquired by Peter the Great, had made a defensive alliance with Persia against Turkey.

It was General Münich who won Russia's victories at Dantzig on the Baltic and at Perekop in the Crimea; but the loss of one hundred thousand men seems too great a price for victories which were completely nullified by the reverses and the treacherous policy of her ally Austria.

Austria's attitude towards Russia was undergoing a rapid change, owing to fear lest her Eastern neighbour should become a menace to her own empire. There was always the danger of Russia finding support among her co-religionists in the Balkan States, which were under Austrian rule, and that she might even aspire to the possession of Constantinople.

These fears, and maybe French gold as well, helped to influence the issues of the war with Turkey; and, by the Treaty of Belgrad, and later on by that of Constantinople, Russia was deprived of all that she had gained in Münich's successful campaign. The only thing she secured from Turkey was the official recognition of the designation "Russia" in place of the obsolete name of "Muscovy."

During the reign of the Empress Anna the life of the Russian people was "more unhappy than that of dogs," and it seemed as if the overpowering influence of the Empress's

German *entourage* would altogether oust the Slav element. So intensely coarse and brutal was the rule of Biron and her other German favourites that Russian history designates this period as that of the "German yoke."

One beneficent act of this reign was the foundation of the "cadet corps," in which general knowledge was taught to the sons of nobles, though the prejudice against education was still as great as ever.

The Empress Anna also entered into a commercial treaty with England, and increased her people's intercourse with China, for the subjection of the Kirghise had brought Russia into close touch with the Celestial Empire.

The Empress provided an heir of her own choice: she called her niece, the Duchess of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, with her husband to St Petersburg, and proclaimed their infant son heir to the throne. On her death-bed she appointed her low-born lover, Biron, Duke of Courland, Regent for the infant Ivan VI. (1740–1741).

To all intents and purposes Russia served as pasture-land or gold-mine for the Germans, who enriched themselves by impoverishing the people. A reaction, however, was setting in—jealousies between the Cabinet Ministers prepared the way for a palace revolution. Everybody hated Biron, who terrorised not only the parents of the infant Emperor but the whole nation: during his rule over ten thousand persons were put to death.

Gradually four parties developed at Court. The first consisted of those Germans whose interests required that power should remain in Biron's hands, and against these were the supporters of the Tsar's parents. The two other parties were more national: one of them desired Peter the Great's grandson, Peter of Holstein-Gottorp, as ruler, while the fourth party favoured Elizabeth, the great reformer's daughter.

Biron's cup of iniquity was full, and the popular indignation found an outlet in risings and military riots. A palace revolution resulted in the transfer of the Regency to the mother of the infant Tsar. Field-marshal Münich was the chief instrument in this *coup d'état*, by which suddenly, in

Tatars of the Mongol Period.

the dead of night, the all-powerful Regent Biron was seized and deprived of his position as well as of his possessions. History repeats itself; as when Mentchikov fell, so now no one was found ready to stand by the fallen statesman. The sentence of death passed upon him by a special Council was, however, commuted into one of exile to Siberia by the Grand Duchess of Russia, Anna Leopoldovna, the new Regent (1740–1741).

Münich, the chief stage-manager to this drama, was disappointed in his expectations; the Regent's husband, and not he, was made Generalissimo of the army, and he found himself intrigued against by his colleague and rival, Baron Ostermann, who, though appointed High Admiral, was still allowed to direct the foreign policy of the Empire. Baron Ostermann favoured Prussia, while the Regent clung to the Austrian alliance. Great complications arose from the fact that Russia's allies—Prussia and Austria—went to war with one another. Russia followed the double-faced policy of not siding definitely with one or the other, but temporising with both. At this point Sweden, egged on by France and hoping to regain all she had lost during Peter's reign, declared war on Russia, professedly in support of Elizabeth's claim to the throne. At that moment France sent as ambassador to St Petersburg the able diplomatist de la Chetardie, who from the first day of his arrival supported the Tsarevna Elizabeth, then the general favourite of the Russian people, and especially of the army.

The Regent, Anna Leopoldovna, although warned by Münich of Elizabeth's aspirations and machinations, was too indolent to take any notice, and continued her lazy and self-indulgent life. She even showed weariness of Münich, the instrument of her elevation to power. Rivalry and jealousy grew rife, and French money freely distributed among the Guard regiments fostered their devotion for Elizabeth, who in 1741 engineered another *coup d'état*, assisted by her various lovers and ex-lovers.

Elizabeth Petrovna had the infant Emperor and his parents arrested, and with the enthusiastic approval and

support of the army she assumed the dignity of Empress and Autocrat (1741–1762). The deposed Emperor, to whose infant mind nothing mattered, was sent to the fortress of Schlüsselburg, while his parents were banished to Cholmogori in the extreme north of Russia. Here the ex-Regent died after five years' exile.

Once again a special Council was called to try the ministers, Münich, Ostermann, and other partisans of the former régime, on fictitious charges, and all were condemned to death by torture and mutilation, but the Empress altered the sentence to one of banishment, for she had made a vow not to shed blood, and after her accession she liberated twenty thousand exiles and prisoners.

Ostermann had to exchange the comfort and luxury of his palace at St Petersburg for the hardships of Bezerov, the very place in which his rival Mentchikov had ended his days. Münich was banished to Pelym, and as he was crossing Kazan his sledge met that of his hated antagonist Biron *en route* for Yaroslavl, in which place Elizabeth had granted him permission to settle. Silently the two deadly enemies bowed to each other as their sledges met and passed one another. Such is the irony of fate! The one fell into the pit which he had dug for the other. Münich went to spend most of his remaining days in exile in the house vacated by his rival.

With the reign of the Empress Elizabeth a reaction against the German rule set in. She turned out the crowd of Germans and members of the Baltic nobility who had been filling every available position at Court, and generously rewarded her supporters, making ample provision for various lovers according to their political or military fitness: thus Voronzov was made Chancellor, and Razoumovski, the man she really loved, a Cossack of humble origin, she married secretly.

It soon became apparent that the new Empress of Russia had inherited many of her father's statesmanlike qualities. She had the same power of discernment and insight into character, and although she made a clean sweep of her father's German officials, however capable, like Ostermann

and Münich, she made Bestujev, a Russian co-worker of her father, her adviser and minister.

Although licentious in private life, Elizabeth proved herself a wise ruler, by whom her father's policy was carried out generously and well. Unfortunately, she inherited his strain of cruelty, which, combined with jealousy and a low standard of morality, led her to perpetrate some abominable brutalities. One of her failings was extravagance in dress, and after her death from fifteen to sixteen thousand dresses were found in her wardrobe. She loved pomp and show; she was kind and amiable to her friends, but stern towards her enemies.

In spite of many defects, she realised the necessity for progress, and in every way furthered education. In foreign policy she also followed in her father's footsteps. Her army fought successfully in Finland against the Swedes, but by the Treaty of Abô in 1743 she exchanged her military gains for diplomatic concessions, and Finland, after being devastated by the Russian troops, was once more restored to Sweden.

Later, during the Seven Years' War, the Empress took the part of Austria against Frederick the Great. Her reasons for doing so were more personal than diplomatic: not only did she dislike the King of Prussia because of his satires against her licentiousness, but she had a genuine sympathy for the King of Poland. At the same time she may have hoped for political advantages from her participation in the war. Her armies under Apraxin invaded Prussia, where the Cossacks soon became a terror to the people; the memory of their cruelties survives to this day. Apraxin, however, did not follow up his successes, and recrossed the Russian frontier. The reason was that the Chancellor Bestujev, instead of entering whole-heartedly into his Imperial mistress's policy, carried on intrigues with Apraxin against the heir to the throne. The Grand Duke Peter of Holstein-Gottorp was an ardent admirer of the Prussian King; of this fact the Chancellor made use in order to discredit him.

The Empress, however, soon discovered Bestujev's

intrigues with the general, whom she sent into exile, while she carried on her war against Prussia with great vigour. Four times during the years 1759 to 1761 the Russian troops under different generals invaded Germany, the allied armies of Austria and Russia even entering Berlin.

Peter I., The Great (1689–1725).
Catherine I. (1725–1727).
Peter II. (1727–1730).
Anna Ivanovna (1730–1740).
Ivan V. (1740–1741).
Elizabeth Petrovna (1741–1762).

CHAPTER X

PETER III. AND HIS CONSORT

Although a grandson of Peter the Great, the heir to the Russian throne was to all intents and purposes a foreigner—a German. The young Duke of Holstein-Gottorp was, at the age of fourteen, chosen by his aunt, the Empress Elizabeth, as her heir, and brought to reside permanently in Russia. The Empress, however, kept him aloof from State affairs, and made no effort to fit him for his future task of ruling the Empire. Lazy and indolent, without inclination for study, he idled away his days drilling a company of Holstein soldiers which his aunt permitted him to maintain at Oranienbaum, his residence some miles from the capital.

One reason for the Empress Elizabeth's capricious behaviour towards him may have been his unbounded admiration for her *bête noir*, Frederick the Great. The Empress had banished the German element from her Court and had promoted Russians to places of power, while her heir showed predilection for all things German—a not unnatural taste, as his father, the Duke of Holstein, was a pure German. All Peter's boon companions were German officers, in whose society he led a dissolute life. Stupid and coarse by nature and instinct, he was specially unfitted to be the husband of the brilliant and clever young wife whom the Empress had chosen for him.

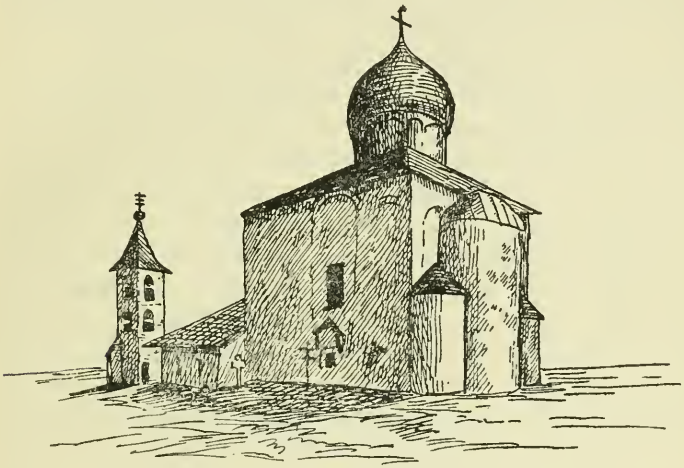
Sophie, Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, was only sixteen years old when the fateful selection was made. As future Empress of Russia she had to change her Protestant faith : she accepted the Greek Orthodox creed, and received the name of Catherine Alexeievna. Thanks to the careful education given her by her clever mother, she was not only well instructed, but also

remarkably intelligent, handsome, good-natured, full of gaiety and good humour; yet this charming, brilliant girl was forced to unite herself with the vulgar, stupid, pock-marked Duke of Holstein. It was impossible for so ill-matched a pair to be happy, and very soon an estrangement ensued. On her part, personal dislike developed into aversion and abhorrence; and on his part, a boorish lack of sympathy turned into stupid resentment at her undeniable mental superiority. He treated her with brutal callousness, and humiliated her wherever and whenever he could. Gradually all pretence of being husband and wife was dropped, and the Grand Duke followed his disreputable inclinations without restraint.

Catherine, who had come to the corrupt Russian Court a pure-minded girl, stood out for a long time against its evil influences. The Empress Elizabeth herself set a terrible example to both country and nation, her immoral habits being common knowledge. The licence she permitted herself was readily imitated by Russian society, and the marvel is that the young princess withstood for so many years all the temptations put in her way. Catherine, however, at that time cared for better things: she loved knowledge, and spent her time studying Greek and reading the writings of the French Encyclopædists. In fact, she corresponded personally with Voltaire and Diderot, and was probably the most cultured and well-read person at the Court.

During these years of self-education she prepared herself unwittingly for the great task she assumed later on. This extraordinarily ambitious and clever girl realised from the outset that to play a leading part in the country of her adoption she must not remain merely an imported foreigner, but must acquire the native language and merge herself in the life of the nation; so she set herself to learn Russian, which she thoroughly mastered. In every way she fitted herself to fill worthily the position which had gradually become her aim and aspiration—that of Autocrat of All the Russias. She soon realised that her husband was utterly incapable of ruling, while she felt herself competent for the task. Others also came to the same conclusion:

everybody at Court perceived her intellectual superiority to that of her husband, and foresaw that, although he might one day be Emperor in name, his wife would be the actual ruler. Thus it happened that after a time a party was formed which aimed at raising her to the supreme power. Chief among her supporters was the Princess Dashkov, a clever, brilliant woman whose whole-hearted devotion to Catherine made her ready to go to any lengths in her intrigues and machinations.



Church of the 12th Century.

Although the young Grand Duchess had kept her marriage-vow faithfully for many years, she succumbed at last to the evil influences around her, and from her twenty-fifth year she began that career of unbridled passion which for the next twenty-eight years made her notorious all over Europe. Her first lapse from virtue, however, was found out by her husband; he complained to the Empress, who condemned the lover to banishment in Siberia, but the Chancellor, Bestujev, succeeded in sending young Saltykov abroad, ostensibly on a political mission.

The tragedy of the Grand Ducal marriage reached an acute stage. Peter now publicly recognised Elizabeth Voronzov, sister of the Princess Dashkov, as his mistress. Thus,

while one sister cast in her lot with the husband, the other intrigued against him on behalf of his wife. Catherine's favourite at that time was a young Pole, Count Stanislav Poniatovski, whose career as her lover soon came to an end : he was obliged to flee into Poland to escape a flogging at the hands of her infuriated husband.

The breach between the Grand Ducal couple had widened to such an extent that Peter unwisely mentioned to his *entourage* the possibility of repudiating Catherine and her son, the young Grand Duke Paul, while on her side, Catherine's dislike to her uncongenial husband had turned to hatred. When, therefore, the Chancellor suggested to her that Peter should, in case of the Empress's decease, be deposed and she appointed Regent during the minority of her son, she readily agreed. From that time Bestujev did all he could to discredit Peter in the eyes of the Empress and to increase his general unpopularity. Peter's admiration for Frederick the Great, whom he called " the King, my master," and the fact of his favouring the Prussian as against the Russian side in the war with Austria, could not but incense the Russian party. His enemies succeeded in so vilifying his character that the Empress for many months at a time refused to receive her heir. In the year 1762, at the age of fifty-three, after a reign of twenty years, Peter the Great's daughter succumbed to an internal malady, accelerated by excessive drinking. On her death-bed a formal reconciliation with her heir and his wife was arranged. In obedience to her adviser, Count Panin, the dying Empress repeated the words suggested to her by her father-confessor : " That she had always loved them, and that with her last breath she wished them all kinds of blessings." The official reconciliation was sufficient for political purposes ; the nation accepted as Emperor the heir appointed by their Empress, and, as Peter III., the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp ascended the throne of his grandfather, Peter the Great.

As the conspiracy against Peter was not yet sufficiently matured, the whole Court hastened to protest their loyalty to the new sovereign. The first foreign potentate whom Peter informed of his accession to power was his beloved " master "

and model, Frederick the Great, who gained materially by this change of ruler in Russia, for the Russian troops were at once recalled and Prussia thus delivered from its Eastern foe. As Elizabeth had entered into the war with Prussia not from political but from personal reasons, Peter was justified in concluding peace; but the undignified haste with which he stopped operations injured his cause in the eyes of the nation, already resentful of his pro-German tendencies.

Discontent with the new régime soon began to make itself felt; rumours spread that Peter III. was going to remodel the whole system of the Empire after the German pattern. At Court there was no party which genuinely supported him: he had made no friends among the Russian aristocrats, his chosen companions were German underlings. When, therefore, it became known that the Emperor had it in mind to divorce his wife, deprive her son of the succession, and raise his mistress to the position of legal wife, the partisans of Catherine renewed their intrigues. Under the leadership of her ardent friend Princess Dashkov a conspiracy was formed which ultimately led to another palace revolution involving terrible crime.

Meanwhile Peter III. unwittingly helped to undermine his own position: instead of making preparations for his coronation in Moscow, where all Russian rulers were, and are still, crowned, he planned a journey to Prussia to pay homage at the shrine of his idol. In his foreign policy he made several serious mistakes: although he stopped the war with Prussia on the plea of putting an end to wanton destruction of human life, he decided simultaneously to make war on Denmark in revenge for some personal injury done to his father in the past; he disregarded the legitimate claims of his ally Austria, and not only made a separate peace with Prussia, but actually sent fifteen thousand troops to assist the shattered army of Frederick, who was thus enabled to reconquer all the territory he had lost.

The internal policy of Peter's reign was mostly of a beneficent character. He abolished a few abuses, especially that of the application of torture; he removed some galling

restrictions imposed upon the liberty of the nobles, and also abolished corporal punishment for all army officers. The members of the army, however, in spite of this, were irritated by the suggestion of reorganisation on Prussian lines.

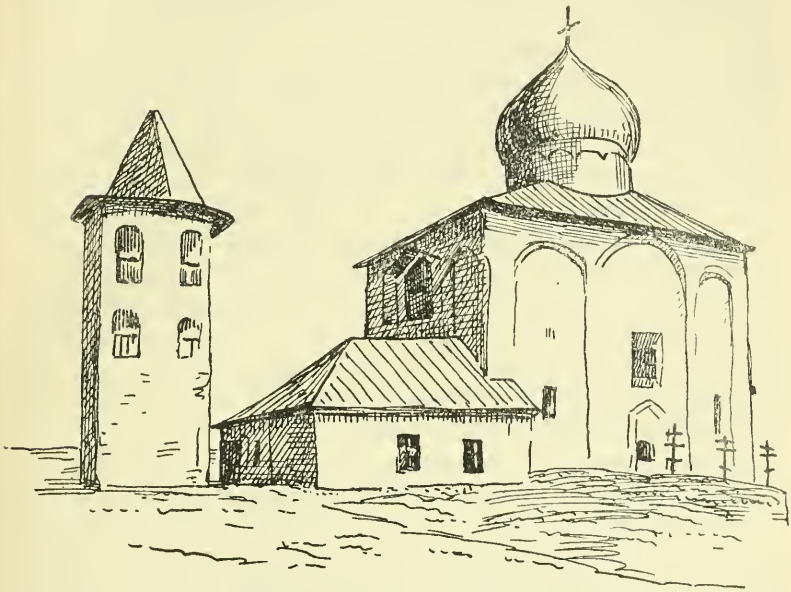
In his personal life the Emperor showed himself during the first few weeks of his reign to be generous, bearing apparently no ill-will towards those who had been opposed to him ; he also recalled from Siberia most of those who had been banished by his predecessor, and amongst others the aged Field-marshal Münich, now a man of eighty-two years of age. For a very short period after his accession all that was best and anything that was regal in his character, which had hitherto shown nothing but meanness, came to the surface. But, unfortunately, it was only skin-deep, for he soon relapsed into the old coarse habits, and his boon companions, male and female, once more acquired the ascendency.

Yet things might have gone on quietly for a time if he had not offended the susceptibilities of the Church. Peter III. did not realise that what his great ancestor had been able to do with impunity would be perilous if imitated by one so mediocre as himself. He confiscated the immense wealth of the Church, allowing all ecclesiastics only a yearly salary ; he also made various arbitrary regulations with regard to their costume and beards. Besides this, he deeply offended the devout members of the congregation by removing particularly sacred ikons from various churches, and the Metropolitan of Novgorod, who vigorously protested against these arbitrary acts, was condemned to banishment. Popular indignation, however, forced the Tsar to rescind his order.

If Peter III. had followed his "master's" advice he would have abstained from thus alienating sentiment and from insulting his wife. Frederick the Great warned him of breakers ahead, but the blinded Emperor had lulled himself into a false sense of security, for was he not doing his best for the nation ? Who would wish to harm him ? His career, however, was doomed to a speedy close, and the rock on which he was wrecked was the ambition of his slighted wife.

While Peter was alienating the Court and the Church by his unwise measures, she was gaining favour with the

populace. A pupil of the French philosophers, and herself an atheist, she now assiduously observed all religious ceremonies, and publicly visited the churches of St Petersburg. By her charm of manner, her wit and intelligence, she also won over to her side those whom Peter was offending. At that time her favourite was George Orlov, a handsome man,



Church of the 12th Century.

renowned for courage, who used his popularity in the army to win over the officers of the Guards to Catherine's side.

The chief instigator, the brain of the conspiracy, however, was the Princess Dashkov, who was also assisted in her dangerous undertaking by the Cossack Hetman Razoumovski, brother of the morganatic husband of the late Empress ; by the Metropolitan of Novgorod ; by Count Panin, tutor to the young Grand Duke Paul ; and by many other influential men who, either from dislike to Peter, love for Catherine, or for the sake of their own aggrandisement, wished to bring about a change of régime. That Catherine's ambition was to usurp the power for herself instead of being satisfied

with the regency on behalf of her son soon became apparent, and in one of the meetings of the conspirators she was sternly rebuked for this by Count Panin, though without avail.

Her friends were divided as to the manner in which the Emperor should be disposed of. Before, however, any plans could be definitely decided upon, unforeseen circumstances arose which forced the issue. The *coup d'état* succeeded better than the plotters had dared to hope, and within a few hours the Guards, who had been bribed, swore allegiance to Catherine, and accompanied by them she proceeded to the Kazan Cathedral, where she was solemnly proclaimed Empress, and her son, the Grand Duke Paul, successor to the throne. The Metropolitan of Novgorod, who officiated, thus avenged the wrongs inflicted upon the Church by Peter III.

Without a shot being fired, without a hand being raised on his behalf, the Emperor lost his crown. Incapable of determined action, he was caught in a trap and forced to abdicate. For six days the deposed ruler of All the Russias was kept prisoner in a castle near St Petersburg; while his star was setting, that of his ambitious wife was rising.

Catherine issued manifestoes in which she set forth her merits, her ardent love towards the Russian people, and her devotion to their religious and social welfare, at the same time accusing her husband of real and imaginary perfidy. These days were not easy for the Empress. Her position was as yet insecure, and her means of bribing the army altogether inadequate; she also knew that if Peter boldly reasserted his rights he would probably be supported by a great majority of the army and of the more orderly citizens.

She used every artifice she could think of to win popularity, and the day after her husband had been removed from Peterhof she made a triumphal entry into the capital and won over to her side even the members of the ex-Tsar's personal *entourage*. Yet serious difficulties lay before the new Empress; there were the claims to settle of those who had assisted her, and, as her exchequer was practically empty, she gave liberally all it was in her power to give — rank and promotion. Nor did she neglect State duties: she

attended the sittings of the Senate, gave audience to foreign ambassadors, and did her utmost to obliterate the remembrance of her illegal assumption of power by graciousness of manner, flattery, and generosity towards those whom she suspected of being her enemies.

But Catherine's authority rested as yet on insecure foundations ; there was a smouldering dissatisfaction which threatened to burst out at any moment. Her fears increased, sleep fled from her eyes, and whether the crime which was to ensure her safety and tranquillity was committed by her order or not has never been proved. The fact, however, remains that, six days after Peter's abdication, two of the Empress's partisans, one the brother of her favourite Orlov, murdered the unhappy ex-Emperor.

If Catherine had been free from all guilt, surely she would have severely punished the murderers of her husband ; instead of this they were left at large, even retaining her favour and their official positions. Once again Catherine played the rôle of hypocrite ; for although informed immediately by Orlov of the Emperor's death, this news was withheld from the public for a whole day, during which she showed herself as calm and serene as if the hideous crime had never been committed. The next day—the seventh after her usurpation of power, or, as she worded it in her manifesto to the nation, " her accession to the throne "—she informed the nation that, in consequence of a serious illness, and " by permission of the Almighty, the late Emperor had departed this life."

Catherine's path to unlimited power had been paved with violence, and the crime which had secured her the throne recoiled upon her heavily, for at least four pretenders claiming to be Peter III. disturbed the otherwise even tenor of her reign : the great rising of Pougatchev especially caused terrible suffering to the nation. The Empire, however, gained nothing but advantage from the change of ruler. In place of the mediocre Peter III., Russia was now governed by the illustrious Catherine II., whose brilliant personality, gifts of rulership, including power of application, knowledge of facts, and accuracy in detail, made her term of government

a period of progress for the Russian nation. In her the mind of Peter the Great seemed to be reflected; and but for the crime to which she owed her accession to the throne, her fame as ruler and administrator would have been above reproach, although her private life will not, it must be admitted, bear close inspection.

CHAPTER XI

CATHERINE II. AND RUSSIA'S TERRITORIAL EXPANSION

(1762–1796)

After the *coup d'état* by which Catherine had come to power she hoped for a period of peace. The country needed rest and time for recuperation, but very soon political complications arose which drew her into war. Although Count Panin strongly urged the Empress to revert to the Austrian alliance so rudely interrupted by Peter III.'s pro-Prussian policy, she persisted in the latter. Catherine II. intended personally to direct the foreign politics of Russia, and all her ministers were permitted to do was to fall in with her wishes.

Her policy was purposeful and persistent, and was crowned with success. During the thirty-three years of Catherine's reign she participated in three different political combinations. In the year 1762 she joined a "Northern Union," an alliance formed by Russia, England, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark, Saxony, etc., to counterbalance the "Southern Union" of Austria and France. In 1782 the balance was shifted, Russia joining Austria and France for a period of six years during which Potemkin and Besborodko were the Empress's political advisers. There was a third change of alliance in 1789 which lasted until Catherine's death in 1796: the Revolution in France influenced Catherine to draw away from that country into closer union with the other monarchical States.

Poland was destined to come in for a great deal of Catherine's attention. The condition of that kingdom in 1768 was as hopeless as ever: strife and discord between the political

factions had reduced the country to a state of anarchy and civil war. In order to save their unhappy country some of the leading patriots decided to call in help from outside for the restoration of order. One party, that of the Potockis, favoured an appeal to Austria ; the other, the Czartoryskis, desired Russia's intervention. The latter won the day, but with disastrous results to the independence of Poland. Catherine's former favourite Poniatovski was elected king, and Russia became, to all intents and purposes, mistress of Poland ; but the hopes of the Poles for a vigorous policy of reform were soon shattered.

Turkey was at this time the recognised defender and protector of Polish independence ; and therefore, when Russia became too aggressive, Turkey was obliged to consider her pledge. Some years previously the German physician of the Sultan is reported to have reminded him that " it is the duty of Turkey to protect Poland's liberty."[1] But Turkey had also other reasons for entering upon a war with Russia : the latter's intrigues in Roumania and Montenegro, her aggression in New Serbia, and her support of the Georgian Tsar as against his suzerain the Sultan, had been irritating the Porte for some time past, so there was no difficulty in finding a pretext for a declaration of war.

Catherine and Frederick the Great, who had become friendly as thieves sharing common spoil over the unhappy victim Poland, upheld, from political reasons, the " Dissidents " or Nonconformists of Poland, who had formed the Confederation of Bar ; for the civil war which was tearing Poland to pieces was being waged as much over the religious as over the political question.

In the midst of all this, the flames of revolt suddenly broke out in the Ukraina, where the Haidamaks (landless Russian peasants who had become robbers) rose against the Polish Roman Catholic nobles. The war-cry of these people was : " For the Orthodox Church—the Church of Christ ! " Hatred of their oppressors and love of plunder led these disorderly bands to revel in carnage and perpetrate most appalling atrocities. They sometimes demonstrated the viru-

[1] See Chapter XXV., " Poland."

lence of their hatred by hanging on the same gibbet a Pole, a Jew, and a dog. This revolt developed into a war of races, creeds, and classes.

At this moment, in October 1768, Turkey declared war upon Russia: this meant that all Russia's troops would be required, and policy therefore forced Catherine to withdraw her support from the Confederation, so that Poland was given a breathing space from Russian interference, and the king, who complained of the Russian Ambassador's tyranny, succeeded in having him recalled. His successor, a gentle and weak man, was incapable of making a stand against Stanislav Poniatovski, who, suddenly asserting himself, refused to help Russia against Turkey. The civil war in Poland was, however, still being carried on: thus Catherine had to deal with a revolt in Poland on the one hand and war with Turkey on the other. Yet in spite of having declared war, the Porte was not really ready for it, and was quite unable to make a successful stand against the five armies which Catherine sent to attack Turkey at various points. Russia was victorious in this campaign of 1768–69; she occupied Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bessarabia, and in Bucharest and Jassy Russian administration was actually introduced.

Even these successes did not satisfy the ambitious Empress. Nothing less than a Russian occupation of Constantinople and a total dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire would suffice. To further her schemes she had planned an attack on the Turks from an unexpected quarter. She sent her fleet down from the Baltic to the Ægean Sea to surprise the enemy in the south—a great undertaking, and one the Turks had never anticipated. At that time Russia was fortunate enough to have in her service several able English naval officers, and, while the fleet was ostensibly commanded by the two Russian admirals Spiridonov and Mordvinov, Rear-Admiral Elphinstone, as an energetic assistant, was with them. The Englishman chafed under the incompetence of his Russian colleagues and the bad condition of the fleet, both as to ships and crew.

When the Russian fleet called at English ports on her

way to Greece, Elphinstone was enabled, by courtesy of the British Admiralty, to make good the most flagrant deficiencies, to procure fresh food, tackle, etc., and to take on board good pilots and some efficient officers.

The horror and astonishment of Turkey at finding a Russian fleet in the Archipelago, added to a rising of the Greeks, was extreme. Catherine, following the Muscovite tradition which made the Tsar heir to the Greek Emperors and thus the natural protector of all the Greek Orthodox Christians of the Balkan States, had assiduously prepared the soil for a rebellion against the Moslem rulers. When the fleet arrived, bringing with it all the ammunition required by the insurgents, a general rising broke out as arranged with Catherine's agents, both lay and clerical.

Montenegro alone did not respond to the invitation to join in the rising, being perfectly satisfied with the rule of a clever adventurer who pretended to be Catherine's late husband, Peter III. The insurrection spread all over Morea, but soon the Greeks got out of hand and terrible atrocities were committed. The campaign ended in failure, for mutual misunderstandings and recriminations had ensued; the Greeks were unable to fulfil their promises, and the Russians were not numerous enough to carry on the enterprise by themselves. Count Orlov, the Russian generalissimo, accordingly abandoned Morea to its fate and withdrew into Italy. Turkish reprisals decimated the unhappy Greek population, who accused the Russians of having deserted them.

The failure of this scheme greatly incensed the Empress, who remarked that the Greeks were not worth helping if they would not make a more vigorous effort to help themselves. She and her generalissimo planned revenge on the Turks. Elphinstone and Spiridonov were equally eager to share in the design. Orlov, who, although not a naval man, had assumed supreme command of the navy, now decided to attack the Turkish fleet, which was twice as big as and in every way superior to that of Russia: but before he could strike a blow the two Turkish fleets united and succeeded in reaching the isle of Chio, off the coast of Asia Minor. As it was then too late to draw back, the Russians determined

to do their best, and if need be to perish in the attempt. The battle began on the 7th of July 1770, a Russian ship sailing boldly forth to grapple with a Turkish one. Both ships were damaged and took fire : of the Russian crew, only fifty managed to save themselves by jumping overboard, while five hundred were blown up with the ship. The Russian council of war decided to renew the attack that night in order to complete the havòc already begun amongst the Turkish fleet ; so in the early hours of the morning, under cover of darkness, the intrepid English officers came alongside the Turkish vessels, quickly set them ablaze, and kept up a bombardment while the fire was spreading. Daybreak revealed the awful extent of the Turkish disaster, and Spiridonov did not exaggerate when he wrote to Catherine, " We are masters of the Archipelago : we have attacked, defeated, destroyed, burned, blown up, and sunk the Turkish fleet."

After this tremendous stroke of fortune, something more seemed possible to Elphinstone ; he proposed that the Bosphorus should be entered and terms dictated to Stamboul under menace of the Russian guns. But this advice did not appeal to the Russian commanders, who, conscious of the weakness of their fleet, feared that it would be only courting disaster to act in such a way. To prove the feasibility of his plan the enterprising Englishman then entered the Dardanelles with his flagship, succeeded in silencing the Turkish guns, and, raising his cup of tea, drank to the health of their ineffectual artillery ; after this he had regretfully to return to his colleagues. Thus the first shots at Constantinople were fired on behalf of Russia by an Englishman. The great victory at Tchesmé made Russia mistress of the Archipelago and raised her in the eyes of other nations. The Empress was more than delighted, and bestowed the title of " Tchesmenski " (" of Tchesmé ") upon her favourite Orlov.

Yet, in spite of success by land and sea—for the Crimea had been taken—this first Russo-Turkish war did not end in Turkey's being crushed. Both countries, in fact, desired a settlement—the Porte realised its desperate plight, and Russia especially needed a respite as the Polish question was reviving in an aggravated form. Peace negotiations were

therefore opened up and an armistice proclaimed at Focsiani in the summer of 1771. Unfortunately, new complications arose ; no settlement could be arrived at, as Turkey refused to allow Russia to keep the Crimea ; but while negotiations were pending war was also being carried on, success alternating with defeat. Finally, however, Roumyanzev's success in Bulgaria forced Turkey to come to terms.

Probably Catherine would have made much greater demands on Turkey if her successes had not aroused European opposition. During the first few years of her reign Frederick the Great had been her loyal ally, Austria being held in check by this Russo-Prussian alliance—" the Northern Entente " ; but when Poland and Turkey simultaneously were engaging the attention of the Russian troops, the Prussian King became more independent and began to play for his own hand.

Catherine's aims in regard to Poland influenced all her political actions. The warring ambitions of Catherine and Frederick the Great—hers to have the dominant influence, his to round off his possessions with a nice bit of Poland—were bound to clash sooner or later, and the internal dissensions of that country also did much to bring matters to a climax. Evidently Frederick feared a possible annexation of the whole kingdom by his ambitious and none too scrupulous neighbour : it was his brother who suggested to Catherine the advisability of partitioning that unhappy land. She was also warned by Frederick that, if she wished to avoid the interference of Austria, she had better stay her hand in Turkey and indemnify herself with Polish territory ; for by this time fear of the increasing power of Russia had drawn Prussia and Austria into a *rapprochement.*

Catherine, seeing the necessity of keeping Austria quiet, accepted the proposal which had already been made, and rejected in 1769. In 1772, Russia, Prussia, and Austria signed a convention in St Petersburg by which Poland was robbed of five million of her inhabitants and 1875 square miles of territory, which had originally formed part of the Russian Lands, and which were to be Catherine's share of the spoil.

Neither France nor England, nor even Turkey, the guard-

ian of Polish liberty, raised a hand to prevent this crime, although their people were aghast at it. The doctrine that "might is right" was thus proclaimed as a political creed. After a year of fruitless opposition the Poles were forced to bow to the inevitable; threatened on every side, all they could do was to submit, and in the silent session of 1773 the Diet recognised the partition.

In regard to the partition of Poland Frederick the Great wrote to his brother: "This act will form a union of the three religions, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Calvinistic (*i.e.* Russia, Austria, Prussia), for we will all communicate of one Eucharistic body, which is Poland; and even if this be not a benefit for our souls, it will in any case be a grand thing for the good of our States." Although Catherine had by this treaty regained a great part of those territories which Russia had claimed as hers by right since the days of Ivan III., such a partial gain could never satisfy her, whose aim it had been to gain possession of the whole country. She hoped, however, that the precedent created would pave the way to further depredations in the future.

Yet for the present Catherine needed peace, in view of Sweden's threatening attitude. Using Roumyanzev's victories as a political lever, she forced the Grand Vizier to come to terms; the negotiations begun at Fosciani came to an end at the Treaty of Koutchouk Kainardji in 1774.

Some historians call this peace "the birthday of the Eastern Question." By it Russia obtained free access to all Turkish waters, the Dardanelles included, and secured the right to have in the Black Sea a mercantile navy which should be granted equal trading rights with the French "as a favoured nation." She retained Kertch, Yenikalé, Azov, Kinburn, and all the country between the Bug and the Dniester, and forced Turkey to recognise the independence of the Tatars in the Crimea and of the Georgians in the Caucasus; thus paving the way to annexation in the near future. Turkey, moreover, was made to pay a heavy war indemnity and to recognise the title of "Emperor" which Peter the Great had assumed, and which the Porte alone of all the European States had refused to accord him. In

return for all these concessions, Russia surrendered all her conquests on the Danube and the Crimea.

The great importance of this treaty was fully realised by the Austrian ambassador, who considered that the Empress thereby became virtual owner of Constantinople, with the Sultan as tenant, to whom notice to quit might at any time be given.

The politics of the more western European countries also had their influence on the Empress. For instance, the action taken by England and Spain with regard to neutral shipping induced her to issue a proclamation to the Courts of London, Versailles, and Madrid on the "privileges and rights of neutrals." She upheld the rights of neutrals to carry on legitimate trade along the coast of belligerent nations. She invited the ambassadors assembled at the Hague to make common cause with her, as such a union would serve to protect trade and navigation and at the same time cause them to observe a strict neutrality: "That there might be no misunderstanding or false interpretation, she thought it might be necessary to specify in this declaration the limits of free trade and what is called contraband." In order to protect the honour of her flag and to secure the safety of the trade and navigation of her subjects, she intended mobilising the greater part of her maritime forces. "This measure will not, however, influence the strict neutrality she does observe and will observe, so long as she is not provoked or forced into breaking the bounds of moderation and perfect impartiality. . . ." Ultimately Great Britain gave a satisfactory reply to this declaration, and France and Spain made their answer conditional on "what part the English navy takes, and whether it will, together with its privateers, keep within proper bounds." Thus in 1781 the maritime treaty of "armed neutrality" was ratified by the Powers, Catherine claiming to be its originator.

With regard to Turkey the Empress had to modify her ambitious schemes; for Joseph II. having changed his views as to the urgency of Turkish integrity, now showed himself quite ready to divide the Ottoman Empire with her, while Catherine's dream was to re-establish the Byzantine Empire

and to appoint her own grandson Constantine as ruler. In fact, the Grand Duke had been prepared from childhood for this position ; he was dressed in Greek costume and had been given Greek companions, with whom he had to converse in their own language.

In 1780 the two monarchs, both of whom had intentions on Turkey, met, the Emperor of Austria visiting Russia *incognito*. He and Catherine met each other first at Mohilev and then travelled together to St Petersburg, where the Balkan Question occupied their careful attention.

As a condition for obtaining Austria's support Catherine had been forced to renounce her " Greek scheme." Although nothing definite was fixed at this meeting, Prussia was alarmed, and, as a counterstroke, the King sent his brother on a visit to St Petersburg, where Catherine, true to her policy of playing one Power off against the other, received him graciously. However, the alliance with Prussia, made by Peter III. and hitherto upheld by Catherine, was not renewed.

In 1782 a new war with Turkey seemed imminent : there was plenty of cause for it—a revolt in the Crimea gave the actual pretext. Catherine, assured of Austria's support, calmly annexed the Crimea in 1783. The Khan surrendered it to her in return for a pension which, alas ! never got beyond Potemkin's pocket. Catherine thus once more increased her territory. She appointed her former favourite Potemkin ruler over the Crimea, to which she restored the old classic name of " Tauris." She also restored to the Kuban district the old name of " Caucasus." War with the Porte, however, was prevented by the intervention of the Powers, France, Austria, and Prussia.

The annexation of the Crimea was a political necessity for Russia : the frequent inroads of the Tatars into Southern Russia made these fertile steppes insecure, and the only means of ensuring immunity from attack was to turn the khanate of the Crimea into a Russian province. Turkey, on the other hand, could not agree to such loss of territory without raising an objection. The preparations for the eventuality had been carried on for a long time, Catherine having taken a personal

interest in the work, which had also been furthered considerably by party strife amongst the Tatars themselves, some of whom had appealed to Russia for support against the Turks.

Potemkin, who had always encouraged Catherine in her ambition with regard to the restoration of the Byzantine Empire, had visions of himself as King of Dacia ; however, *faute de mieux,* he set himself the task of creating to the best of his ability a new Russia on the ruins of the former Tatar khanate. He founded the town of Cherson, where he built himself a gorgeous palace in which he held his Court like a genuine Eastern satrap. He founded several towns, two of which, Ekaterinaslav (" the glory of Catherine ") and Ekaterinburg, were named after his Imperial mistress.

Annexation had opened up these fertile lands for colonisation, which soon became the great point of attraction for the Russian peasant. A great wheat market was thus created in the " New Russia." When the Peace of Koutchouk Kainardji made Russia free to navigate in the Black Sea, Catherine had at once given orders for the building of a mercantile fleet to ship the golden grain to other lands.

During this period European politics also occupied Catherine's attention. Her Austrian ally, Joseph II., was planning the annexation of Venice and of various Balkan provinces, but his correspondence with her was chiefly on the topic of Turkey, which they hoped to divide between them. Western Europe, however, began to resent Catherine's aggressions ; Prussia and France intrigued against her at Constantinople. There was a growing feeling that a fresh war was imminent. Russia was ready, and Admiral Greigh had already prepared a plan for attacking the Dardanelles. The Austrian Chancellor, too, thought that it was a propitious moment for his country to strike and regain what had been lost at the Treaty of Belgrad ; but Turkey held back, for her politicians were divided, and the peace party won the day. Thus war was postponed for a time.

The Empress took advantage of this lull in the storm. She decided to visit her newly acquired possession, the Crimea ; perhaps, too, she wished to judge for herself of her

powerful friend's rule, which had been frequently denounced to her. The journey was undertaken in 1778. The foreign ambassadors, then at St Petersburg, were invited by the Empress to accompany her on this tour.

This was Potemkin's opportunity: he decided to dazzle the world with a display of Russia's resources, and to show to the Empress the marvellous success of his organisation and rulership. As far as Catherine was concerned his efforts were crowned with success. She let herself be deceived by the appearance of prosperous towns and villages which in reality did not exist. Potemkin, a first-rate stage-manager, had provided movable scenery so that the same painted fronts of houses, seen at a distance, and the same well-clad peasants, greeting her at different places, made her believe in the prosperity of the district. The French ambassador is said to have felt great pity for the Empress, who allowed herself to be thus deceived. Potemkin's ingenious trick has become proverbial in Russia, and sham prosperity is called to this day "Potemkin's villages"!

Catherine's journey partook of the nature of a triumphal procession. In Kiev, Polish nobles, Tatars, Kirgise, Kalmucks, as well as representatives of Western Europe, thronged her Court: Orient and Occident met as in a phantasmagoria. Although the subject of politics was avoided on this journey, the atmosphere was nevertheless pregnant with it. The King of Poland came to meet Catherine *en route*, and while that meeting was of no political importance, the rendezvous at Cherson with Joseph II. was full of significance. The two sovereigns were impressed by the fleet at Sevastopol: they marvelled at the genius of Potemkin, who had apparently created a new civilisation on the ruins of Tatardom: all—forts, fleet, etc.—seemed almost like a *fata Morgana*, so incredibly swift had been their appearance!

That the susceptibilities of Turkey would be offended by this journey was certain; but what most provoked the Porte was the Greek inscription on the triumphal arches erected by Potemkin all along the route: "Road to Byzantium!" The French ambassador, realising the meaning of this boast, looked glum, the Austrian Emperor, on the contrary,

seemed to enjoy the grim humour of the situation. He wrote home: "... and now imagine what the Sultan must feel like! He is sure to be daily expecting the Russians to come and shatter the windows of his palace with the thunder of their guns!" In fact, this in itself was quite sufficient provocation for an outbreak of hostilities.

The possession of the Crimea had only whetted Russia's appetite for "more." The important fortress of Otchakov was now coveted and also the passage through the Dardanelles, while Russia's occupation of the Crimea gave the Turks a feeling of insecurity, and Austria, anticipating that the Ottoman Empire would soon fall a prey to Russia, wanted to put in a claim for a share in it. Intrigues, bribery, stirring up of party strife in the Caucasus, where the Tsar, Heraclius of Georgia, had in 1783 appealed for a Russian protectorate—all these combined now led to new complications. The Empress had only just returned from her triumphal journey when war was declared by Turkey after an ultimatum of 13th August 1787, which Russia could not possibly accept. France and Austria worked for peace, England and Prussia against it, Prussia and Sweden trying to profit by Catherine's embarrassment.

Turkey took the offensive and attacked the fortress of Kinburn. Potemkin, visionary and stage-manager, quailed before danger—courage failed him; and, but for the exploits of General Souvorov, Turkey would have been able to march into Russia. He, however, saved the situation, and relief and joy reigned once more in St Petersburg. His success on land was to be followed up by the fleet, but Potemkin's famous ships had been hurriedly and therefore badly built. A naval defeat disheartened the Russians, but Catherine, never daunted, urged on the siege of Otchakov, which Souvorov took after a stubborn resistance, the Russians losing four thousand, while the Turks lost ten thousand men.

Suddenly Sweden declared war. While Russia and Austria were fighting against Turkey, the Swedish king, Gustavus III., had sent to Catherine preposterous and arrogant demands, as if "he had already won three victories." She, however, desired to show him, as she put it, "that even should he

win them, he would still find a resolute woman to oppose him at the head of a devoted people."

The situation thus created by the Swedish ultimatum caused deep consternation in St Petersburg, which was within easy reach of the Swedish frontier of Finland. There were hardly any troops stationed in the capital, so that workmen, and even cooks, etc., had to be quickly enrolled as fighters. The Empress kept a stout heart: her cool head and masterly statesmanship never failed her. The Russians, under Admiral Greigh, won a victory at sea, but the land campaign, which

St George and St Dmitri.
(Stone bas-relief of the 12th century in the Monastery of St Michael in Kiev.)

was fought out on Finnish soil, had not much success till relief came in the unexpected form of a conspiracy formed amongst the Finnish officers of the Swedish army, who, encouraged by Russia, hoped to obtain independence for Finland. This occurrence, together with a rising amongst the Swedes themselves against their King, who they declared had violated the constitution, placed Gustavus III. in a very precarious position. He in his turn was extricated by an attack made by Sweden's hereditary foe Denmark, which at once aroused the loyalty of the Swedish people.

In 1790, a year after Greigh's success, the Russian navy suffered a severe defeat, but, in spite of this success, the King of Sweden was ready to make peace, his people were weary of war. Catherine, too, was quite prepared to compromise;

she required another breathing space, as the South was claiming her full and undivided attention. Thus the Peace of Värela was concluded (1790), and from that time onwards Gustavus III. became the friend and ally of Russia.

Her Austrian ally, Joseph II., had died in the meanwhile, and his successor, Leopold II., not only concluded a separate peace with Turkey, but had also formed an alliance with England and Prussia for the "safeguarding of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire." Thus Catherine had to stand alone in her war against Turkey; yet the deeds of General Souvorov, especially his siege of Ismail, which ended in the terrible massacre of its twenty-six thousand inhabitants, made Constantinople tremble. Besides this, Catherine's troops were successful on the Danube, in the Caucasus, and on the Kuban. Still, the Empress was anxious to repeat the naval succesess of 1770—another victory like the one at Tchesmé was her ambition—and she therefore transferred her fleet from the Baltic to Turkish waters.

Her victories, however, awoke the hostility of Pitt, who considered the existence of the Ottoman Empire as of great importance to England. He wished to send ships to assist Turkey after the fall of Otchakov, but when he asked Parliament to vote a grant of money for this purpose it was opposed; neither Lords nor Commons saw any reason for going into the war—it did not seem to matter to Britain who possessed the Bosphorus. Pitt gave way, and so "the Russian armament" came to nought, otherwise the Crimean War might have been antedated by sixty-three years.

The Russian fleet, under Admirals Oushakov and Paul Jones, the notorious American buccaneer, succeeded in destroying the Turkish fleet. This, added to other Russian successes, decided Turkey to make peace, which was concluded at Jassy, Besborodko acting as Russia's plenipotentiary. Potemkin, who had reckoned on signing the treaty himself, was only prevented by death from harvesting more laurels to which he had no right; for, hitherto, he had always taken the credit for all Souvorov's victories.

At Jassy Catherine showed unexpected moderation, and, with the exception of Otchakov, practically all the territory

taken by Russia was given back to Turkey. Although the actual gain of territory was very small, the annexation of the Crimea was officially recognised by the Porte; thus the whole northern shore of the Black Sea was now in Russia's possession. Catherine's moderation was the result of the political situation in Western Europe, for many potential enemies were on the look-out to complicate matters for Russia.

However, as before in 1772, so now in 1792, she compensated herself at the cost of Poland. Cause for interference was not far to seek. Prussia had gained influence in Poland by supporting the king in his attempt to establish a new constitution, which was to create order out of anarchy. Catherine thereupon sent troops into the Ukraina, consenting to recall them only on condition that the constitution should be abrogated. Trusting in the promises of Prussia, the King of Poland refused to comply with Catherine's demands, but found himself betrayed; for, under the pretext of establishing order, the Prussian army invaded the unhappy land. A Diet was called in 1792 which was forced to agree to the second partition of Poland. This led to a great national rising, ruthlessly put down by Prussian and Russian arms. Souvorov attacked Warsaw, and, after an appalling massacre in Praga (one of the suburbs), the capital had to surrender. The result of all this was a third partition in 1795, which put an end to Poland's existence as a separate kingdom.

In consequence of this total dismemberment of Poland, Catherine was enabled to unite with her Empire all the ancient Russian Land, with the exception of Galicia, "the Golden Russia" of early days. On the strength of this, the Empress felt herself justified in declaring that she had not taken "a hand's breadth of Polish territory." Thus after nearly three centuries the ambition of Ivan III. was at last realised.

Catherine's original intention of making Poland a vassal-state of Russia had been frustrated, however, by the desire of Prussia and Austria to have a share of the booty; and thus, *faute de mieux*, she had to be satisfied with a partial acquisition of territory with a population of about five millions.

For centuries Poland had been the Jews' Eldorado, where

they had a recognised status ; where, on conversion to the Roman faith they became members of the nobility, ranking with the Szlachta [1] ; where they enjoyed the legal monopoly of trade and commerce. All this was now changed, for Russia refused to grant them equality, and thus the Jewish problem came to the mighty Empire as a direct result of Catherine's political crime.

Even the partition of Poland did not set a limit to Russia's expansion, and a pretext for further acquisition of territory, this time in the Caucasus, was soon found. The Tsar of Georgia, Russia's vassal since 1785, requested Catherine's assistance against the Shah of Persia, who had attacked Tiflis, carrying away many captives and much booty. Russian assistance was dearly bought, the friends proving nearly as harmful as the foes ; but this war against Persia was not fought out in the reign of the great Ruler of Russia.

The reign of Catherine the Great was thus a period of territorial expansion by means of costly wars ; but although they were ruinous economically, Russia gained enormously in prestige and became a power to be reckoned with by the rest of Europe.

The verdict on this extraordinary woman who personally guided the helm of the State depends upon the point of view from which she is judged. She has provoked endless criticism, but two facts are beyond all dispute—her great intellectual powers and the aggrandisement of Russia, to whose territory she added five hundred and sixty thousand square miles.

[1] See Chapter XXV., "Poland."

Russia at the Close of the Eighteenth Century.

CHAPTER XII

THE ERA OF CATHERINE THE GREAT

The ambition of the young wife of Peter III. to become ruler of Russia had been fulfilled. True to her motto, "I must reign or perish," she found herself at the head of the vast Russian Empire.

This period of Russian history is stamped so absolutely with the personality of this extraordinary woman that it is impossible to treat of the events of these years without taking it into special account. She was in many respects like her great predecessor Peter I., more particularly so in her untiring labours as ruler of the realm. Like him she took personal note of all that went on in her Empire. Although she describes the eighteen years of her life in Russia as Grand Duchess as having been a period of "*ennui* and loneliness," they were not wasted years, for it was during this time of enforced political inactivity that the future Ruler of All the Russias stored her mind with knowledge, to be applied in later years for the benefit of her people.

She studied the best authors of the world, and was as much at home in classic as in modern literature; her love of history was genuine, for she found solace and forgetfulness of her troubles and sorrows in study. Her passion for history was so absorbing that she was able to say, "Even in my sleep I compose history." As years went on Catherine's love of study and work only increased, so that her intellectual culture surpassed that of her *entourage*, with the exception of her friend the Princess Dashkov, who was nearest to her in intellectual ability.

The Empress revelled in mental effort, and the numerous marginal notes on her ministers' reports prove how minutely she studied the documents laid before her. She laboured

untiringly, not only at the business of the State, but at literary work and correspondence, which frequently dealt with educational and legislative problems. She gave herself time to study carefully each point of legislation, such matters being too important to be merely glanced at casually.

Her custom was to get up at five or six o'clock in the morning, so that to this active and energetic sovereign a working day of fifteen hours was no unusual thing. She honestly tried to solve the difficulties of administration which presented themselves, and, when she thought it necessary, even went so far as to invite all Europe to come to her help with advice. A case in point was her desire to find a practical solution of the problem, " How to abolish serfdom without too much upsetting existing economic conditions ? " She offered seven thousand ducats for the best essay on the subject. The prize was awarded to Beardé de l'Abbaye of Aix-la-Chapelle, among one hundred and sixty competitors, only seven of whom were Russians.

Despite the fact that Catherine was an ardent admirer of Western culture and also cherished a platonic friendship for illustrious foreigners, her " favourites " were all Slavs. She was wise enough rightly to value the advice of experienced Germans, but she gave them no public position of influence ; her advisers and ministers, Panin, Potemkin, Besborodko, and Betzkoi, were all Russians. She appreciated the fact that Englishmen were at that time better sailors than the Russians, but although Elphinstone and Greigh fought her battles on the sea, winning Russia's greatest naval victory, yet it was Alexei Orlov whom the Empress credited with the honour and glory.

Although the Empress profited by the services and advice of able men, her period of rule did not produce any very striking personalities, for the simple reason that her own was so overpowering that it made everybody else appear more or less insignificant.

Of all the men with whom the Empress became intimate, only the two brothers Gregory and Alexei Orlov, and Potemkin, played any political part, the others being nonentities, most of them carefully chosen or approved of by Potemkin, who

would permit no other to gain ascendancy in influence. Even after he had lost his position of favourite, Catherine still spoke of Potemkin as " my pupil, my friend, almost my idol." He always remained her friend and adviser, his masterful and visionary nature strongly appealed to her ; she was attracted both by the likeness and contrast to herself shown by this remarkable man. Her clear, practical mind was troubled by no illusions ; it was nevertheless Potemkin's power to dream such dreams as that of a resuscitated Greek Empire which fired her ambition, and it was no doubt one of the reasons for his great influence over her. On the other hand, Alexei Orlov managed to maintain his position, after dismissal from the post of favourite, by dint of sheer dogged determination. He simply refused to be shaken off and deprived of power, and his Imperial mistress rewarded his persistency by frequently bestowing upon him positions of command.

Catherine wanted not only to understand everything but also to have a hand in everything, and her great optimism, her implicit faith in herself, made her rush in where others feared to tread, and often it was only sheer luck which prevented her from making terrible mistakes. Contemporary verdicts about her are unanimous as to her intellectual qualities, but agree also as to her great vanity. Joseph II. wrote thus of her : " Her vanity is her idol, and her tremendous luck and the competition of Europe to shower exaggerated adulation on her have spoilt her." The " Semiramis of the North," as she was called, could hardly remain humble-minded. It is said of her that she had " all the vanity of a self-made man " ; to her the idea that she should not succeed in her undertakings seemed preposterous.

She admitted frankly that she was not of a creative turn of mind, but was able and willing to accept and adapt the wise thoughts and counsels of others to her own needs. She never deceived herself on this point, nor did she ever make any pretence of having produced an original work in her " Instruction," drawn up for the guidance of the Legislative Commission ; on the contrary, she expressed her belief that Montesquieu and Beccaria, whose works she had plagiarised, would not mind being thus utilised to so good a purpose.

When Catherine undertook to prepare a library for her grandchildren, and for their benefit even wrote a history of Russia, she made use of the able assistance of experts. Her original literary efforts are letters, and some anonymous satires published in the *Entertainer*, edited by Princess Dashkov.

As a letter-writer Catherine excelled ; it was in her correspondence with clever men such as Voltaire, Diderot, Frederick the Great, Joseph II., etc., that she found refreshing relaxation from the arduous duties of sovereignty. These letters reflect her keen interest, her wit and sarcasm, her appreciation of the thoughts of others, and her sympathy with everything which concerned education and progress. She was something of a hero-worshipper, and had a great admiration for Diderot, whom she would have canonised, as she expressed it, had she been the Pope.

In a mock " Epitaph " on herself, the Empress wrote that when she came to the Court of Russia as a young girl there were three whom she desired to please : her husband, the Empress Elizabeth, and the nation. The first she soon had to give up as hopeless, the second she was obliged to keep on pleasing, but it was the last which vitally influenced her actions throughout her whole life.

This German princess, who had not a drop of Slav blood in her veins, and who had violently usurped the throne, had to act a very different part from that of her predecessors, in whom the nation reverenced the lawful representatives of power. Anna Ivanovna, secure in her position as niece of the great Tsar, and Elizabeth as his daughter, had no need to think of ways and means for establishing or strengthening their position. They could frankly give way to their impulses and to their own idiosyncrasies—could favour Germans and disregard popular feeling—for were they not divinely appointed rulers in whose veins ran the same blood as in their people ?

Not so Catherine ; hence her purposeful policy to be as " Russian " a ruler as tact and persistency could make her. She had faced her position from the very outset, and had done her utmost to become a Russian of the Russians, to master

the language and to appear a devout member of the national Church. What a drawback she felt her German origin to be appears from a remark made to her doctor once when he was bleeding her: "There goes the last drop of German blood, I hope!"

There was, however, a rival to Catherine for power—a legitimate claimant, the Tsar Ivan VI., who, on the accession of the Empress Elizabeth, had been incarcerated in the Schlüsselburg fortress and had there been left to grow up in his prison: robbed of his crown, deprived of air and sunlight, he had developed into a pale and colourless youth with stunted mental development. In the year 1762 an attempt was made by an officer to liberate the unhappy Tsar, but this led only to his murder, for standing orders had been given to his warders to kill him on the spot should such an attempt be made. Whether Catherine had any share in this crime has never been fully ascertained; but at any rate a few months only after her usurpation of power the last legitimate rival to the throne was removed and Catherine delivered from a threatening danger.

Historians differ as to whether the domestic policy of Catherine II. was due to a genuine care for the nation's welfare, or whether it was dictated merely by personal ambition. We are free to give her the benefit of the doubt and to accept as true some, at least, of her oft-reiterated statements of her honest desire to help the nation, although in her later years she no longer acted up to her ideals.

Such was the ruler of Russia: a woman balanced in mind (if not in heart), clear in thought and purpose, conscious of her own gifts and powers. A brilliant talker, witty and genial, she charmed all who came into contact with her socially. To this list of intellectual gifts must be added political insight and diplomatic talent, which rendered her at times callous and inconsiderate and ready to drop at a moment's notice those who were of no more use to her; in fact, she possessed that political insincerity which would almost seem to be the *sine qua non* of a successful diplomatist. At the same time there was nothing small or mean in her character.

Following in the steps of Peter the Great, Catherine proved herself tolerant in religious matters. She was a child of her time in this respect : the teaching of the French philosophers tended to religious indifference, which in a sovereign exhibits itself as toleration. Policy may also have influenced her attitude, for the many German colonists and French immigrants who settled in Russia by her invitation would not have come without some such guarantee. In order to regulate and administer the affairs of these non-Greek Orthodox subjects, she established a department in connection with the Home Office to safeguard their interests. Through the annexation of Polish territory the Empress also ruled over a large Roman Catholic population, with regard to which she had a correspondence with the Pope ; in one matter, that of the Jesuits, she showed great independence, and permitted them to have a seminary in Mohilev and Polotsk, though they had been turned out of Rome. The number of her Moslem subjects was increased by the annexation of the Crimea, and to them, too, free exercise of their religion was granted.

Catherine was at one time strongly influenced by the democratic ideas of the French writers : Montesquieu especially appealed to her. Democratic in theory, absolutist in *practice*, these two contradictory elements found expression in the way the Empress inaugurated and carried out her great attempt at reform. In 1767 she called together a Legislative Assembly to assist her in the task of formulating laws, the existing codification being inadequate and out of date. This elected body was composed of representatives of every province, every separate nationality, and every class, save that which comprised nearly half the nation—the serfs. Six hundred and fifty-two deputies assembled in Moscow, where the Empress opened this National Council in person.

The assembled deputies offered her the title of "The Great," "The Wise," "The Mother of the Fatherland" : she accepted the last only, as expressing her desire to bestow blessing upon her people. She read her carefully drawn-up "Instructions," or "Nakaz," for the guidance of the deputies, to whom she had promised perfect freedom of discussion

and inviolability of person. The "Instructions" closed with the words: "Flatterers have instilled into all sovereigns upon earth this pernicious maxim: that their people are created for them only. But we think and esteem it our duty to declare that we are created for our people; for this reason we speak of things as they are, and have by this legislation intended to make Russia more just and happy than any nation upon earth. To be disappointed in this purpose would be a misfortune we do not wish to survive." This famous document was mainly composed of quotations taken, practically verbatim, from Montesquieu and Beccaria; it was a great source of pride to Catherine, who sent copies of it to various crowned heads and was vastly pleased with the adulation showered upon her in return.

As her position on the throne was not a very secure one, she felt the need of external support, to gain which she did all she could to acquire a reputation for wisdom and for appreciating all that it was the fashion to admire. As a matter of fact, she richly deserved her fame on account of her great natural gifts, but much of the applause she received from her foreign admirers was mere fulsome flattery. Frederick the Great saying, among other things, that the "Greeks would have placed her between Lycurgus and Solon."

For nearly a year the Legislative Body sat in consultation, and every aspect of the nation's life was fully deliberated upon. In 1768, on the outbreak of the Turkish War, the General Assembly was dissolved, but sub-committees carried on the work for another six years in St Petersburg with excellent results. The Empress attended two hundred and three of its sittings, and therefore could honestly say: "The Legislative Commission has given me enlightenment, insight, and knowledge with regard to everything concerning the whole Empire, so that now, knowing with what we have to deal, we know what we ought to do."

Despite the fact that the Empress favoured the nobility and, later on, even increased their power, she was in the early days of her reign quite genuine in her desire to alleviate the condition of the serfs. In this she was in advance of her time. Her difficulty was to find some plan of liberating the

serfs without upsetting economic conditions or injuring the nobility by depriving them too suddenly of unpaid labour. Already for this purpose in 1766 she had founded the "Free Economic Society," which was especially to study the agrarian problem; some of its members, *e.g.* Princess Dashkov and the Archbishop of Rostov, defended the principle of serfdom, so much so that the former succeeded in convincing Diderot that "liberty would only make the peasants more and not less unhappy"; and Count Nicholas Scheremetiev was distinctly in the minority in his opposition to the system of serfdom. To show the practical sincerity of his opinions he volunteered to be the first to set his two hundred thousand serfs free if only the Empress could pass a law to that effect.

No wonder, then, that when this select body showed itself antagonistic to any change in the status of serfs, the General Assembly, representing so many vested interests, also opposed reform; in fact the opposition of the deputies was practically unanimous on this point, even the Cossacks speaking in favour of serfdom. Although the Assembly had been called together for the express purpose of righting the wrongs of the nation, individual and class selfishness at once made itself apparent when this vexed problem came up for discussion.

Everyone clamoured for increased rights, and even those, such as the merchant class, who had never been allowed to own serfs, now agitated to have the prohibition removed. The voiceless suffering serfs found very few advocates: one of them, Prince Shtcherbatov, propounded the doctrine that serfs were human beings and therefore entitled to just and human treatment; but he did not oppose the system of serfdom as such. The current idea was that, "as the canary must be kept in a cage, so must the peasant be kept in bondage."

All the more honour, therefore, to the one man who boldly spoke up on their behalf; this was Korbjin, a lieutenant of artillery, who, himself a member of the privileged class which he now attacked, exposed the terrible state of existing facts and pleaded for legislation on behalf of the serf. But, with the exception of the Empress, hardly anyone shared his point of view. Her partial sympathy at least may be gathered from a marginal note she made on one of the documents laid

before her : " If it is impossible and impracticable to recognise the serf as a ' person ' capable of having any legal right, then he is not a human being. You evidently look upon him as a beast of burden ; such an attitude brings us no honour in the eyes of the world, and it also shows a lack of love for mankind ! "

At this time the power of the owner over his serfs had become absolute ; for them there was neither justice nor redress. Their masters could banish them to Siberia, send them to the mines, or put them in the army for life : they were bought and sold like cattle.

In spite of her excellent intentions, the Empress did not succeed in ameliorating the lot of the unhappy peasant ; she even failed to abrogate the law prohibiting serfs from accusing their masters. However, when specific facts of abuse of power came to her knowledge she interfered to some purpose.

Perhaps the most notorious case of this kind was that of the Countess Darya Saltykov, whose awful misdeeds came to the knowledge of Catherine in an unusual way. Two serfs ventured to write directly to her to acquaint her with the general miserable state of the human chattels owned by this great lady. For a wonder these letters actually reached the Empress, and she at once instituted an inquiry which proved that the Countess had done to death one hundred and thirty-eight serfs either by means of the knout, by starvation, or by letting them freeze to death. It came to light that she had bribed those officials who knew of her tyranny to keep silence, and that, secure in the immunity thus obtained, she gave free rein to her brutality. When all this was substantiated, the Empress had her first pilloried and then incarcerated for life.

At this period of Russian history the peasantry was divided into two distinct classes : free peasants, who were permitted to have serfs of their own if they wished, and who lived on land owned by the State, to which they paid direct taxes ; the other class, comprising more than half of the population, consisted of serfs. They were owned either by the Church, by the Imperial family, or by private owners. Also, all who worked in factories, whether owned by the State

or by private individuals, and all employed in the Government works—canalisation, etc.—were serfs. The factory serfs enjoyed a few privileges—among others, the right to marry whom they chose, while agricultural and domestic serfs were paired off at the pleasure of their master.

Half the peasantry was thus in bondage, being the absolute property of their owners, whom they served either by personal labour or by money payment: the latter could live away from the land and follow trades in towns, but had to pay a percentage of their earnings to their masters. Thus we find not only artisans, but even artists, musicians, and actors, as private property of some grandee who had paid for their training.

Although the Empress had appeared so eager to help her down-trodden subjects, and in spite of certain measures of relief, such as in 1773, the temporary suspension of the masters' rights to send their serfs to Siberia, matters only grew worse. So inconsistent is human nature, that all the theoretical arguments against serfdom went to the wall when it suited the Empress; by her own direct order she turned more than eight hundred thousand free peasants into serfs for the sake of recompensing military service, or in token of favour to her lovers. She gave away Crown lands with all the people living on them; for the value of land was reckoned not only by area but still more by the number of "souls" on it.

After the partition of Poland matters grew still worse, and one and a half millions of the free peasants of the Ukraina, where serfdom had never before been introduced, were turned by her into serfs. She only did what Boris Godounov had done to the free Muscovite peasantry in the sixteenth century, the motive being the same in both cases—both had usurped a throne and had therefore to curry favour with the nobility, which they did by supplying them with the labourers they were always in need of.

The Empress was anxious to develop in the Russian nobility an *esprit de corps* such as existed among the Germanic nobles of the Baltic provinces. There, however, the aristocracy was of ancient lineage and formed a close ring into which no outsider could find admission; while among the Russian nobility very few old families remained, thanks to

those Muscovite princes whose policy it had been to crush all whose power might interfere with their own. During the reign of Ivan the Terrible in the sixteenth century whole families belonging to the ancient aristocracy were killed off, "with all their kith and kin." That Tsar created a new aristocracy from among the lesser nobles whom he had gathered around him, and whom he rewarded with grants of land for their service at Court; thus a new class of landlords and of high Court officials developed, but one to whom State service and official rank were of greater importance than their lands. Another change was introduced by Peter the Great. Finding that these great landowners did not support him sufficiently in his reforming activity, he began to create a new nobility from among the poorer class of gentry. One of the methods of selection he employed was to mix up all the social elements in his newly created army. He decreed that everybody, prince and noble, must rise from the ranks; and thus, whatever the social standing, leadership became the reward of ability and not birth.

The bureaucracy which Peter established also helped to swell the number of nobles, as he arranged that nobility should come automatically to those who had served the State for a certain number of years, *i.e.* those who had risen sufficiently in the hierarchy of service, the "Tchin." This new order of society therefore contained representatives of all the various shades of aristocracy, from the descendants of the great princes of olden times to the newest parvenus.

Of such elements was the Russian nobility composed when Catherine called the Legislative Commission. She increased their privileges, liberated them from the compulsory State service introduced by Peter I., and succeeded in bringing cohesion into this heterogeneous body and thus created an organised privileged class. Moreover, she gave them local self-government by elected representatives, who met at the special Provincial Assemblies presided over by the marshal of the nobility of each province.

Again and again in the history of Russia the same phenomenon occurs: whenever the lot of the peasant became too unbearable, riots and insurrections broke out;

The Patriarch Philaret, father of Mikhail Romanoff, the first Tsar of the New Dynasty. 17th Century.

and so it was in 1775, the terrible rising under the leadership of a Cossack named Pougatchev being only a symptom of the intolerable conditions then reigning in Russia. Pougatchev, who claimed to be Peter III., miraculously preserved from his would-be murderers, found ready support among the disaffected population of south-eastern Russia and the Cossacks of the Yaik district, many of whom were Old Believers who had conscientious objections to being ruled by a woman. At the head of this motley crew of exasperated and fugitive serfs, Cossacks and Kalmucks, Pougatchev soon terrorised the neighbourhood. He followed the tactics of his famous forerunner Stenka Razin, who a hundred years earlier had led the great rising in the Volga district. He offered freedom to the peasants, with "right" to kill their masters and to form themselves into Cossack communities. To the Russian peasants Pougatchev seemed a reincarnation of their hero Stenka Razin, and they hailed the Pretender with joy, especially when he published a manifesto announcing the abolition of serfdom.

Terrible was the carnage committed by these lawless bands under their brutal leader, and so serious was the rising that the Empress was obliged to send an army against them and to set a price of five hundred thousand roubles on Pougatchev's head. His insurrection had been so successful that he planned a march on Moscow which it was absolutely necessary to prevent; the two hundred thousand serfs living in that city would almost certainly join the insurgents. In the event the rising was quelled, Pougatchev was betrayed, taken to Moscow, and condemned to have his hands and feet cut off and then to be quartered alive. This was the only instance in which the Empress reverted to the cruelties formerly practised by Russian rulers.

So bitterly did Catherine resent this rebellion, with the memories it evoked of her murdered husband, that in order to obliterate every trace of it she changed the name of the place where the insurrection broke out from Yaik to "Uralsk." She even forbade this rebellion to be mentioned; the very fact must be buried in oblivion.

The Empress was told by a wise adviser that "the real

danger to her rule was not Pougatchev but the prevalent discontent." Influenced for a time by this advice, she made a desultory attempt to alleviate the lot of the peasants and serfs.

From a national economic point of view the Empress was anxious to increase the agricultural population of the Volga district, where the fertile meadow-land had long lain waste for the same reason as did the Steppes, namely, want of security from nomad tribes. To populate these parts, and also to provide the Russian peasantry with teachers and practical illustrations of rational agriculture, the Empress invited colonists from Western Europe to come and settle on the lower Volga. She offered them free land, five years' exemption from taxation, and religious liberty, with the right to build their own churches and schools.

In 1765 five thousand German colonists responded to her invitation. The first settlement was called "Ekaterinenstadt" (Catherine's Town), in honour of the Empress. In 1774 twenty-six thousand more immigrants came to Russia: the French immigrants, however, proved themselves unsuited for pioneer work and unable to battle against such fearful contingencies as raids by Kirghise and Kalmucks, etc. They soon scattered themselves all over the Empire, settling mostly in the cities, where they found occupation as tutors, cooks, ladies' maids, barbers, etc. The Germans, on the other hand, proved splendid colonists: thrift, persistency, and energy converted the fertile but insecure meadow-land, where the wild cattle had for so long been grazing at large, into prosperous colonies. One of these settlements was formed by Moravians.

The hopes of the Empress that her Russian peasants would profit by the example of their more advanced German neighbours were doomed to disappointment. Fusion was impossible, the difference in status and culture being too great: on the one hand were privileged freemen, on the other serfs; the Germans literate, the Russians quite ignorant. These German colonies presented, and still present, the same marked contrast to the neighbouring Russian villages: prosperity, as represented by clean, solid houses, gardens, and good roads;—next door, abject poverty, dirty tumbledown huts, and bad roads.

By her statesmanlike action in granting these newcomers religious toleration Catherine secured for her Empire good and worthy citizens, for all those colonists became Russian subjects, thus forming an integral part of the Russian Empire.

The annexation of the Crimea in 1783 was to have a far-reaching effect on the agrarian question. The fertile Steppes, hitherto exposed to the attacks of the neighbouring Tatars, were now open to cultivation. The peasants, at all times ready to go in search of better conditions, migrated to the new districts of South Russia, which soon became the granary of Russia, and within thirteen years of the annexation the population of this " New Russia " increased from two hundred thousand to eight hundred thousand.

After having succeeded in improving agriculture and increasing the area of arable land, Catherine turned her attention to the export and import trade of her country and to the furthering of commerce in every way. She personally prepared a treatise on manufactures, and weighed the advantages of trade with China and India as compared with Western Europe.

She made commercial treaties with France and England, and wrested from Turkey at the point of the sword the " most favoured nation clause." Thanks to the annexation of the Crimea and the conquest of Otchakov and the harbour of Sevastopol, Russia was in a position to maintain a mercantile fleet on the Black Sea. But it was greatly due to the fruitful activity of certain Frenchmen, amongst others the Duc de Richelieu, that Odessa developed into the important harbour that it is to-day. Trade with Persia and China also increased, and Astrakhan became an important mercantile harbour.

For the safeguarding of her new sea-borne trade Catherine passed in 1785 some important maritime laws. She also created a " Mercantile Society " and founded a school of navigation. Acting on the advice of her wise counsellor Count Sievers, she greatly facilitated trading by further developing the system of canalisation begun by Peter the Great, linking the White and the Caspian Seas by means of canals between the Dvina and the Kama.

The costly wars waged during the reign of Catherine were

a terrible drain upon the resources of the country. In her anxiety to make up the deficit she doubled the poll-tax. This increase in taxation nearly drove the peasants frantic ; however, it added twenty-four million roubles to the revenue. Yet the State expenditure remained far in advance of the income, which, by the year 1796, had only increased to sixty million roubles, while the expenditure had reached the sum of seventy million to eighty million roubles.

The drink monopoly, which supplied one-third of the total amount, was another great source of revenue, but it was raised at the cost of the moral and physical well-being of the nation.

The standard of Russia's currency had been hitherto in copper, not in gold ; but in 1768, six years after Catherine's accession to power, paper money was introduced. Russia's finances were in a most critical condition, and the lavish extravagance of the Empress throughout her reign helped still more to impoverish the country. Each of her many favourites, as her acknowledged lovers were officially styled, received one hundred thousand roubles on the first day of his installation, and on his dismissal he received a fortune in land, serfs, and money as consolation for the loss of her favour. There is a terrible contrast between the luxury and extravagance indulged in by the Empress and her all-powerful minister Potemkin and the abject poverty of large masses of the population.

Catherine's great and frequent wars were carried on by means of a large and efficient army, for Peter the Great's military reforms had produced excellent results. The Russians have always made first-rate soldiers, and their pluck, patience, and persistence have always been generously acknowledged by friend and foe alike. Catherine was fortunate in having such generals as Souvorov and Roumyanzev to fight for her, and she was equally fortunate in her admirals : the names of Greigh, Elphinstone, and Dugdale will always be linked with some of Russia's greatest naval victories. Unfortunately, as Peter's immediate successors had let his ships rot, Catherine had practically to rebuild the navy and a mercantile fleet as well. It may be that because Russia

is a continental Power, which until recently had no seacoast to speak of, the Russians proper (not to confuse them with the inhabitants of the Baltic provinces or the Finns, who are born sailors) do not take kindly to a seafaring life. Therefore Catherine's English naval officers were often severely handicapped by the inefficiency of their crew.

The reforms begun by Peter the Great were to be carried on by Catherine, who was probably as remarkable a woman as he had been a man, and therefore eminently fitted to take up the work death had forced him to lay down.

These two great personalities, however, expended their energy in essentially different spheres of activity. His principal task had been to awaken the latent energy of his people, exacting physical exertion and restless activity; while it was her first aim to awaken the nation out of its mental lethargy. Peter the Great taught his people to work, showing them by his own example how to set about it. Catherine "the Great," as her foreign admirers called her, taught her people to think, proving the value of mental culture by her own intellectual achievements.

All attempts at education during the first half of the eighteenth century were doomed to failure, for, to quote the historian Tatishtchev, "It is vain to look for the harvest before the soil is prepared for the seed"; or, as another contemporary expressed it, "They (Peter the Great and his successors) wished to accomplish in a few years a task for which centuries are required. They built the edifice for our enlightenment on sand without first laying a solid foundation."

The educational reforms which Peter had inaugurated were doomed to become so much waste-paper, as it was impossible to open schools without teachers or books to learn from, or even buildings to learn in. He issued a command to every town and village that elementary schools should be founded. This order was carried from place to place by the officials who were engaged in taking the census. When asked by the puzzled people who was to teach and what was to be taught, the officials gave the vague reply that an ukase dealing with the subject would shortly be promulgated. But the great Tsar

died without issuing that particular ukase. In any case he could not have effected this reform, as the material for such a scheme of national education was lacking, and time was needed in which to prepare it.

All that Peter the Great had succeeded in doing was to establish a few technical schools, his object being to prepare men for practical work, for his army and navy, and for exploiting the mineral wealth of the Empire. Thus the Artillery and Navigation Schools and an Engineering College were established, with a staff of foreign teachers. The navigation school served as a training-ground for teachers, and two by two the students who had finished their course were sent away to other centres to teach others what they had just learned; but as the places vacated were not fully supplied by new students, the chief school was soon obliged to suspend its activity. However, by this means forty-two schools were established by 1722, the principal subjects taught being arithmetic and geometry. The attendance of pupils was compulsory, and they were treated as servants of the State; every breach of rules was dealt with as a breach of the law and punishment was proportionately severe. All this did not conduce to an influx of scholars. The Academy of Science, on the other hand, could not flourish on account of the lack of students, and the "Gymnasia" or high schools for boys, were frequented only by the children of foreigners domiciled in the two capitals.

Peter I.'s orders in regard to the duty of the Church towards popular education and enlightenment had resulted in the establishment of forty-six Church schools, and at the time of his death nearly every town could boast of a church school as well as of a secular one. But evidently the time for national education had not yet come; the people put forward a multiplicity of reasons why they should be exempt from sending their children to school.

An attempt to fuse the Church and secular schools by introducing mathematical teaching into the Church schools came to nought through the refusal of the ecclesiastical bodies to teach matters unconnected with religion. Thus the artificially nourished secular schools created by the Tsar

collapsed after his death, and in 1744 only eight were in existence, even these being attached to garrisons and attended by children of soldiers, with officers and non-commissioned officers as teachers.

Until the reign of Elizabeth (1742) nothing more was done for education. Then a fresh start was made, owing to the influence of her adviser and Minister of Public Instruction, Ivan Shouvalov, who, himself a thoroughly cultured man, wished to lead his people from darkness into light. He presented his art collection to the nation as a nucleus for a future Academy of Arts, and in 1755 founded the University of Moscow and also two Gymnasia to prepare boys for a higher education. Shouvalov succeeded in establishing schools even in such a distant part of the Empire as Orenburg. It was also from the extreme north and south of the Empire that the first Russian authors hailed—Trediakovski from Astrakhan, and Lomonossov from Archangel.

The schools established by Shouvalov formed the link between those of the Petrine period and those to be created by Catherine II.

There was as yet, however, no general desire on the part of the nation for education, especially on Government lines ; the nobility refused to send their children to the Government schools, preferring to have them taught at home in the traditional way. The burghers were generally successful in their plea for the exemption from schooling of their children ; thus only a limited number, and those mostly the children of foreigners, were available for instruction : even the Gymnasium in St Petersburg suffered from lack of human material to work upon.

The Academy and the University of Moscow were practically without students, while the Faculty of Medicine in the same town had but one student. Lomonossov, who was made Inspector-General of Education, frankly admitted that not only was there no University to speak of, but not even the suggestion of one. He did his utmost to place education on a sounder basis, not only financially by getting a large grant from the State, but also socially by securing a better status for the teaching profession. For example, the sons

of priests were encouraged by the ecclesiastical authorities to become teachers, but should they later on wish to change their profession, the only other one open to them was the army, which they could, however, enter only as common soldiers.

Such were the conditions of education when Catherine became Empress of Russia. Fully realising the necessity for national education, she made it her definite aim to bring intellectual enlightenment within reach of all her subjects : it was this purpose which gave moral value to her reforms.

After a careful study of the subject, Catherine came to the conclusion that a complete reorganisation of the existing educational system, whether in the home or in the school, was urgently required. In the homes of the nobility the drastic methods of Sylvester's " Domostroi " were still in vogue—unbending severity prevailed ; no caressing of children was allowed (except with the stick), and the instruction imparted was almost exclusively of a religious nature, while that of the schools was primarily utilitarian. It was the intention of the Empress to change all this, and to introduce real education as opposed to a mere acquiring of knowledge.

Having realised the failure of the old compulsory methods, Catherine now decided to see what persuasion would do. Education was to be absolutely voluntary and attendance at school to be made as attractive as possible.

Catherine invited Baron Grimm, with whom she had long been in correspondence on the subject, to become Director of Russian Education ; but he declined this thankless task, preferring to give advice to his Imperial correspondent by letter.

At last the Empress had to acknowledge the fact that bureaucratic education would not supply the want : something absolutely different had to be tried, and a solution of the difficulty was suggested to her by Colonel Betzkoi, in whom she found a keen and sympathetic collaborator in her educational reforms. He proposed the establishment of boarding-schools into which children of five and six years of age should be admitted and carefully brought up until they reached their eighteenth or twentieth year.

He was convinced of the necessity of withdrawing children as early as possible from the coarse and evil influence of their homes and thus preventing them from acquiring the bad habits of their parents. By this means he hoped to regenerate the race and to evolve " a better race which would produce a new type of parents, who in their turn would bring up their children in the good principles implanted in them." Colonel Betzkoi's scheme was sanctioned in 1774 by the Empress, and Lomonossov, as Chief of the Educational Department, declared himself ready to establish such boarding-schools for infants in connection with the Gymnasia.

In order to procure the necessary material for this experiment, advertisements were sent out and notices published in the newspaper, with the result that sixty-four infants were brought for inspection, thirty of whom were selected by a special committee. The trouble felt by parents was that they had to sign away their children for the whole period of education, and also that they were allowed to see them only at rare intervals, and then always in the presence of a teacher.

Catherine's ideal of female education was to give to girls the same intellectual enlightenment as to boys. Their minds were to be afforded a fair opportunity of development by means of serious reading ; by study and thought they were to fit themselves for their particular work in life. In accordance with this ideal the Empress founded the Institute of Smolna for daughters of the nobility, on the model of Saint Cyr established by Madame de Maintenon.

Here, under the able superintendence of Madame Lafont, a new type of Russian woman was turned out. The education may have been superficial as compared with that of the present day, great importance being given to the acquisition of good manners and fluent French ; still, it marked a great stride forward. The ideal was a high one : good housekeepers, faithful wives, and careful mothers were to be turned out by this " Institute."

For the boys Colonel Betzkoi was enabled to found a Cadet Corps on the same lines ; and although critics sneered at the multiplicity of subjects taught instead of imparting purely

military instruction, yet Russia surely could not but gain by an institution whose ideal it was not merely to produce skilful officers but good and cultured citizens.

These experiments affected solely the upper classes, and the problem of bringing education within reach of the masses had not yet been solved. The Educational Commission of 1770 proposed compulsory education as it existed in Prussia. There was to be one school to every hundred or two hundred families, the expenses to be paid by the parish : but this scheme was obviously premature and fell to the ground.

The Empress corresponded with various celebrities on this matter, and especially with the Emperor of Austria, as it had been suggested to her that the Austrian system of normal schools might be applicable to her country's need. She spent much thought on this problem, carefully studying pedagogical works, especially the writings of Commenius, Fénelon, and Locke.

In a letter to Baron Grimm she wrote that she took such infinite trouble over each educational scheme that it took her at least a year to consider each point. Yet she comforted herself with the thought that in so vast an Empire as hers one year more or less did not matter. She required time to let her plans mature ; as she put it : " If God would grant me the length of days of a Methuselah, then I might be able to accomplish something for the elementary education of Russia."

The first necessity was to provide teachers, and, after having carefully considered Joseph II.'s advice, she at last decided to introduce the Austrian method. At her request the Emperor sent her in 1786 Jankewics, a Serb, whose Slav origin, Greek Orthodox religion, and knowledge of Russian eminently qualified him for his task. The Emperor wrote of him : " I am sending you a man, capable, clever, full of knowledge—in fact, the best man possible."

The scheme proved a success, and Russia was fairly started on the work of providing general education. Catherine did not share the idea so often expressed by a certain school of Russian politicians, that the education of the masses would be detrimental to the State. She wrote to Baron Grimm :

" No one can frighten me with the danger of an educated people and nation." She agreed with him that only fools and knaves fear an educated people : and she proved the sincerity of her belief by untiring efforts to promote education.

During her reign two hundred and twenty-three schools were opened, and from the two training centres—St Petersburg and Moscow — a network of schools of all grades gradually spread over the country. The Empress took a personal delight in her new schools, saw to the publication of suitable school-books, to the training of teachers and the hygiene of the class-rooms : in fact, it was she who laid the foundation of the present system of Russian schools. But with regard to elementary education, the eighteenth century was not destined to see it permanently established. The various attempts made proved at least partly abortive, and after twenty years of honest effort to bestow upon her nation the blessings of education Catherine experienced keen disillusionment. She did her best, and posterity accords to her honour for having done so. To secure for her people better medical care, she also founded in 1774 a Medical College, and provided for an increase of doctors and chemists.

But while the Empress was thus trying to lay the foundations of the education so sorely needed by the nation, the Academy was only just keeping itself alive, having practically no students to attend the lectures ; in 1783 the only two in residence were found to be so ignorant by the new President, Princess Dashkov, that she took them personally in hand and made them come to her on alternate weeks at eight o'clock in the morning for instruction.

The Empress had appointed this capable friend of hers President of the Academy of Science. The energetic Princess put her shoulder to the wheel, and during her term of presidency, 1783–98, the Academy did excellent work. Entomological, archæological, geographical, and zoological studies especially were promoted.

Six volumes of a lexicon of the Russian language were compiled, in the preparation of which the Empress took her share ; very valuable historical documents were brought to light, especially " Nestor's Chronicle," the source from which

has been drawn the history of Russia's early days, and the MS. of the famous epic, "The Raid of Igor." A scientific exploration of Siberia was set on foot; astronomical observations were encouraged, etc., etc.

The Empress would have liked some eminent savants to settle in her Empire, but her personal invitation to Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau to make Russia their home was not accepted, only Diderot consenting to pay a short visit to St Petersburg.

Catherine purchased rare collections of books, and transferred the valuable library which the Metropolitan of Kiev had presented to Warsaw, to St Petersburg, where it formed the nucleus of the Russian Imperial Library.

The Empress also furthered art. In 1764 she founded the Academy of Art, and encouraged foreign artists to visit St Petersburg. Amongst others came Madame Lebrun, who painted many portraits. Catherine's agents, especially Baron Grimm, bought up numerous art treasures on her behalf—sculptures, pictures, cameos. The growing luxury of the capital offered a fair chance to artists and architects—not only to Italians, but also to a number of Russian pupils of Rastrelli. This master had served Russia for fifty years, during which time the artistic sense had developed rapidly, and many Russian nobles now built themselves fine palaces, which they filled with art treasures.

During the first half of her reign the Imperial authoress sympathised with all literary effort, and consequently the intellectual awakening of her country had free scope to develop, and poetry, drama, and satirical and philosophical writings were produced by Russian authors. Later on, however, Catherine's attitude towards intellectual progress, as expressed in the contemporaneous Russian literature, underwent a great change; for in proportion as Russian society learned to think and reason for itself, the unhealthy social and economic conditions began to influence literary activity.

Catherine proved herself unable to endure criticism, whether of her country or of her actions, though there was much to criticise.

One of those who dared to do so was the publicist Novikov, who, not satisfied with superficial official reforms, tried to go to the root of the evil and work for a true moral regeneration. He edited periodicals and tried to practise what he preached in them, showing himself a benefactor of the people in more ways than one; he established a printing and bookselling business from which good books, especially translations, were sent all over the Empire. He also did his best to further education, and during a famine organised relief for the sufferers. In his satirical writings he expressed in quite an amiable way his criticisms of economic conditions, especially of serfdom; and as the Empress had always previously ranged herself on the same side it came as a great surprise to everybody when this truly good and patriotic man was arrested and condemned to death on the plea that he was guilty of political agitation. The only possible explanation of this act is, that both Church and State were against him because he was a Freemason. The death sentence, however, was changed to one of imprisonment in the Schlüsselburg fortress, where for four years he occupied the very cell in which the unfortunate Tsar Ivan had dragged out his miserable existence.

Mongol Mask-Visor.
(13th century.)

Although Catherine had theoretically upheld progressive ideals, had professed humanitarian and philosophical principles, had discussed with Diderot the regeneration of Russia on constitutional lines, and had even contemplated the emancipation of the serfs, she had no spiritual understanding. As she could neither understand nor control them, she objected to all spiritual movements, whether Mystic or Pietistic, which were finding favour with certain sections of Russian society.

As time went on her democratic and republican sympathies underwent a complete revulsion. This may have been due

in part to the result, as exemplified in the French Revolution, of the "Liberty, Fraternity, Equality" doctrine preached by her great French teachers.

This change of attitude showed itself in her domestic policy, and led to the repression of every expression of sympathy with France and Liberalism. Even the use of such words as "liberty" and "citizenship" was prohibited, and writers like Cicero and Demosthenes were banned because they were republicans; and although the old Russian custom of cutting out the tongue was no longer resorted to, Catherine found other means just as effectual for silencing the friends of the new ideas.

The second literary victim of Catherine's inability to stand criticism was Radistchev, who, under the literary guise of a description of a journey from St Petersburg to Moscow, described the appalling condition of the serfs, at the same time showing how this might be changed for the better. In spite of the vaunted liberty of the press guaranteed by the Empress, Radistchev was banished to Siberia.

The dramatist von Wisin wrote comedies in which he also denounced the crying evils of Russian society, but his position as secretary to Catherine's Minister, Count Panin, seems to have secured him a certain immunity.

What Catherine craved for was praise and adulation, which the first Russian writer of odes, the poet Derjavin, gave her unstintingly.

There is a terrible irony in the fact that Catherine, who had written so profusely on the necessity of reform, should later have been the first ruler to use her autocratic power for the muzzling of the press. Her innate love of power and consequent desire to dominate she had perhaps to a certain extent held in check while under the influence of the French philosophers. After all, she was first and foremost Autocrat of Russia, and she came to see that the principles of the Revolution, if applied to her own country, would have unpleasant consequences for the rulers of Russia.

Peter the Great had found himself handicapped in his reforms by the lack of native collaborators, and in the statue erected to his memory by Catherine this fact is strikingly

typified in the whole conception of the monument: a strong man riding bareback on a horse which he is in the act of taming; it rears under his iron hand, but is dominated by him.

The monument erected in the reign of Alexander II. to the memory of his great predecessor Catherine is, in its way, just as typical of the change which had come over the nation in the time which had elapsed between Peter's first attempts at reform and hers. The seed Peter the Great had sown was bringing forth fruit; no longer alone, or surrounded by foreigners, was the ruler who carried on the work he had begun. The artist, a Russian, has symbolised this change in the arrangement of the monument.

High above everyone towers this wonderful woman, who by her exceptional gifts overshadowed all around her, but who nevertheless owed the success of her reign to able and gifted men who supported her, carrying out what she had planned. They are all Russians whom the artist has grouped around the base of the statue, and they are truly representative of the various spheres in which such great progress had been made during Catherine's reign. These fellow-workers of the Empress are portrayed in an attitude of friendly intercourse. Potemkin, the "Prince of Darkness," as the people called this all-powerful Minister, is seated in a carelessly arrogant attitude, one foot on a turban crushing it, as though in scorn of the conquered foe—who had not even been actually conquered by him, but by the two unpretentious soldiers at his side. These are in the act of reporting their splendid victories: their names are Roumyanzev, the hero of the Danube battles, and Souvorov, the idol of the Russian soldier, their "Little Father."

The next group represents the naval victories: there stands Count Alexei Orlov-Tchesmenski, holding a telescope in his hand, symbolical of his share in the battle of Tchesmé for which the Empress had given him all the glory, but which had been merely watched by him from a distance, while the destruction of the Turkish fleet had been accomplished by Elphinstone, Greigh, and Dugdale. Beside Orlov stands Admiral Tchitchagov holding a golden sword in his hand, a symbol of deeds done and glory won in honest battle against the Northern foe.

But Catherine's reign had more to show than merely conquest, and this is represented by the figure of Betzkoi, her helper and adviser in educational and humanitarian reforms, and of Besborodko, the polished diplomatist and signatory for Russia of the Treaty of Jassy. Both of these are looking at the plans of the Foundling house which they were instrumental in founding. One other group completes the number of helpers thus immortalised: Princess Dashkov, that brilliantly clever and cultured woman, is depicted as absorbed in the study of an open book, symbolical of her work as President of the Academy of Science. Coupled with her is Derjavin, the poet laureate of the Great Empress, who seems to be reciting some grand ode in praise of Catherine's victories and her aggrandisement of Russia.

If only the internal conditions of Russia had been managed with the same success as her foreign policy, the nation would have had more reason to bless the memory of the ruler who began her reign ostensibly as a believer in the great humanitarian principles of equality and liberty, and who wrote in her maxims for the guidance of her grandson, "Before God all men are equal," yet who left the majority of her humble subjects in as hopeless a plight as ever. She who in the beginning had expressed her desire to abolish the word "slave," and who wrote, "I want obedience to law and not slavery," and again, "Liberty is the soul of all things, and all is dead without it"—nevertheless turned two million three hundred thousand free men into serfs merely to satisfy the greed of her favourites and courtiers.

Posing before an admiring world as a liberal reformer, Catherine was nevertheless an autocrat by nature and instinct. She was greatly pleased when told by Montesquieu that autocracy might be philosophically justified for Russia, and that there was nothing derogatory in a comparison between her rule and Asiatic despotism.

CHAPTER XIII

PAUL I.

(1796–1801)

The Empress died suddenly at the age of sixty-six, of an apoplectic fit. Her death brought unmitigated joy to one individual—her son, of whom his friend Count Rostopchin had written only a short time previously: "The Grand Duke is bursting with impatience, and can think of nothing but the moment when he shall ascend the throne."

"Le roi est mort, vive le roi!"—thus said the clever diplomatist Besborodko, who was the only one of all Catherine's ministers to find favour with the new Emperor. Some say that he took an active part in destroying Catherine's will, in which she had passed over her son and appointed as her successor her beloved grandson, the Grand Duke Alexander.

Historians agree in surmising that if Catherine had lived a few years longer Paul would never have come to the throne. This view was shared by the English ambassador, who already, in 1782, had written to Lord Grenville to this effect. Between mother and son there had been strained relations, the ambitious Empress fearing in him a possible rival; for there had always been a party which contended that the power should have been given into the hands of the Grand Duke at his coming of age. This son of so magnificent and clever a mother proved himself physically and intellectually her inferior.

That he rejoiced when she died is only natural when we take into consideration the fact that he had been purposely kept back from all participation in affairs of State; that, although Grand Admiral of the Navy, he was never even

permitted to visit Kronstadt; and that when for once he was with the army on active service in Finland, orders had been given by the Empress that he was not to be told anything of importance. She denied him the right to manage his own domestic affairs, interfering to such an extent that he and his charming second wife, a Würtemburg princess, were not permitted to keep their children, who were taken from them and brought up in their grandmother's palace by tutors of her choice, the parents being permitted to see them only once a week.

The "Young Court," as the household of the Grand Duke Paul was called, was established at Gatchina, a place some miles outside the capital. There the Grand Duke was forced to live practically in retirement, and spent his time drilling soldiers in the Prussian way. This occupation finally became a mania with him.

The death of the Empress liberated him from his invidious position and gave him his birthright—unlimited power, for which he had always craved. Unfortunately, he did not know how to use this newly acquired liberty, and the first acts of his reign were merely acts of revenge. This is hardly to be wondered at, for he had suffered keenly from the insolence of his mother's favourites. He had also nursed a bitter hatred against those of her friends who had assisted her in the *coup d'état* which had brought death to his father. The Emperor had the body of his murdered father exhumed and the coffin put beside that of the late Empress. Thus the honours denied to Peter III. thirty-three years earlier were now accorded to him. Paul's revenge was a refined one —Count Alexei Orlov was made to walk behind the coffin of his victim, and was forced to carry on a cushion the Imperial Crown, of which he had robbed the hapless Emperor. The Princess Daskhov, who had been the moving spirit in that conspiracy, was banished from the capital and prohibited from residing in any one place for more than three days at a time: hunted like a deer, she found no rest until the Empress prevailed upon her husband to let the unhappy lady live in peace on her estate. Potemkin's bones were exhumed and thrown into a ditch: "Sic transit gloria mundi" was the

sardonic remark of the Emperor when the deed was accomplished. He banished every friend of his late mother and filled the vacant posts with his Gatchina soldiers, most of whom were quite uneducated men.

The military system which Paul I. had worked out in Gatchina was now introduced into the army, and brilliant and experienced generals and field-marshals had to submit to being instructed in strategy and tactics by a German lacquey who could only speak broken Russian.

In fact, the Emperor reversed everything : the cumbersome rococo uniforms, with powdered wigs and queues, which Potemkin had replaced by ordinary uniforms, were reintroduced ; and when the famous old Field-marshal Souvorov criticised this unpractical order, he was sent into banishment : he had, however, only expressed what the whole exasperated military world felt.

However, this mania for reversing everything proved a blessing to a few innocent victims of Catherine's reign : Novikov was liberated from Schlüsselburg, and Radistchev was recalled from Siberia, as were many Polish patriots.

This policy of reversion made itself felt also in the realm of foreign politics. It was Paul's ambition to be the arbitrator of Europe, and to this end he addressed a letter to all the Powers in which he protested his love of peace and of humanity, expressing his disgust for war and declaring that he had no desire to increase his territory. His love of peace was soon drowned in his hatred for republican France, which influenced him to change his policy.

The bone of contention was Malta, to which he laid claim as Grand Master of the Order of St John of Jerusalem, a dignity which had been conferred upon him in 1798 by one-half of the Knights who had been expelled from their headquarters by Napoleon. England's antagonistic attitude towards his claim also proved an irritation to Paul, who clung tenaciously to what he considered to be his rights. He greatly prided himself on his position as Grand Master, and lavishly distributed the decoration of the Order. It was rather an anomalous position for a Greek Orthodox to be at the head of a Roman Catholic Order, and to soothe the deeply offended

Pope the Emperor gave permission for an active Roman propaganda to be started in his Empire.

Suddenly and unexpectedly he also formed an alliance with Austria and England, as well as with Naples and Turkey, against France. In 1799, on the suggestion of his allies that they would like to have the great soldier Souvorov as generalissimo of the Austrian and Russian armies, the Emperor recalled him from banishment in a flattering letter, to which the old man simply replied : " Souvorov is coming ! " Nor did he disappoint the trust placed in him. After his famous passage over the Alps and his successful campaign in northern Italy, he was granted the title of " Prince of Italy."

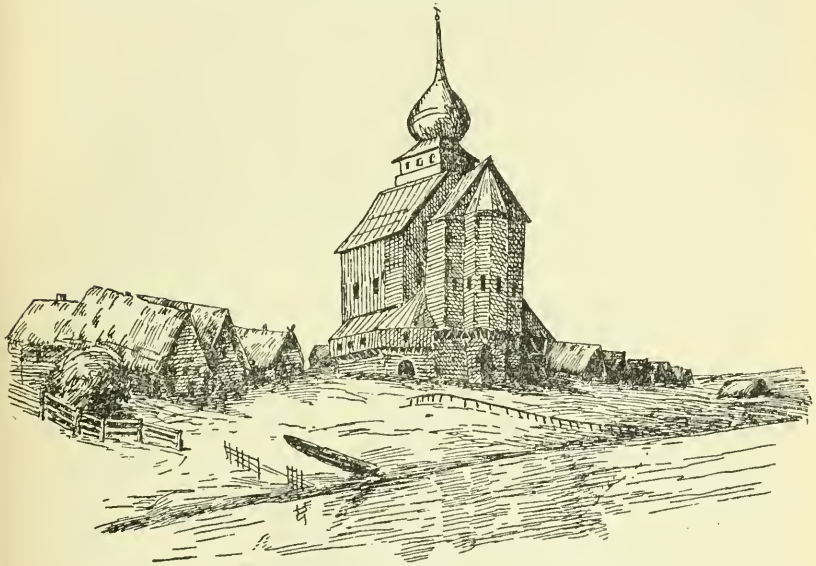
Before long, however, there was another international change of politics, for the astute First Consul had by this time taken the measure of the Russian ruler, and, by dint of flattery and such kindly attentions as sending him back the Russian prisoners of war, he succeeded in winning him over, with the result that a new coalition of Powers ensued.

Henceforth Paul I. became an ardent admirer of Napoleon, to whom he wrote : " Whenever I see at the head of a nation a man who knows how to rule and how to fight, my heart is attracted towards him. I am writing to acquaint you with my dissatisfaction with England, who violates every article of the law of nations and has no guide but her egoism and self-interest. I wish to unite with you in putting an end to the unjust proceedings of her Government." He followed up this letter by breaking off relations with England and dismissing her ambassador with brutal insolence. With the ambitious Corsican, on the other hand, the Emperor was now on such excellent terms that they even planned together a division of Europe. Turkey was to be dismembered and a Greek Republic under Russian protection to be set up : India was to be attacked from Central Asia, and Khiva and Bokhara to be annexed *en route*. In 1801 Georgia was definitely annexed, and thus the protectorate established by Catherine found its logical conclusion.

One way in which Paul demonstrated his friendliness to Napoleon, and incidentally his antagonism to the late

Empress, was by expelling all those Bourbons to whom she had given a refuge.

The four years of Paul's reign may be described as one long nightmare to his subjects, who went in terror of their lives. In 1800 the Imperial Chancellor wrote: "The ill-humour and melancholy of our master is increasing by leaps and bounds." Indeed, the arbitrariness of this master was fast driving his ship of State upon the rocks.



Church of the 13th Century.

The whole country groaned under the government of a ruler whose eccentricity bordered on insanity.

Two men only seemed able to manage the unhappy Emperor: one the cultured Count Rostopchin, who amused and humoured him; the other Kutaissov, an ex-Turkish prisoner of war, first valet, then barber, and ultimately Master of the Horse to Paul I. This man acquired such power over the Emperor that it was only through him that any favour could be obtained. To these two names must be added that of Araktcheyev, who, though hard, cruel, and relentless in character, yet showed himself capable of sincere and devoted attachment to Paul, to whom he acted as military adviser.

At his coronation he lavishly distributed largesse, and gave away eighty-two thousand free peasants, who now became the property of the recipients of Imperial favour. He ruined the finances of his country through his ignorance of the laws regulating the value of paper money. He was kind by fits and starts, and must have been capable of tenderness and affection, for he succeeded in winning the love of his wife and that of one or two such men as Araktcheyev and Kutaissov ; but, on the whole, his irascibility and unevenness of temper and violent likes and dislikes made him a terror to all who had to do with him. In fact, one contemporary wrote : " We seem to have returned to the days of Ivan the Terrible." All his officials and ministers felt like " galley slaves " ; officers had their honour outraged by being flogged, and soldiers were actually killed for innocently falling foul of some unimaginable caprice of the Emperor. Whole regiments were exiled to Siberia from the parade-ground, and were only recalled through the intercession of Paul's omnipotent favourite Kutaissov.

He grew worse as time went on ; even the Empress and the Grand Dukes were not safe from his violent caprices, and the feeling soon became prevalent that a stop must be put to this state of affairs at all costs. It seemed, indeed, as though the days of Ivan the Terrible had returned, but with the difference that the nation had developed both in intelligence and initiative ; the whole country was living in terror, and, as the leading men realised that a *débâcle* was inevitable, it is not to be wondered at that a conspiracy was set on foot.

During the four years of his reign the Emperor exiled to Siberia twelve thousand officers and soldiers for failing to carry out accurately his minute regulations concerning wigs, buttons, etc. The prisons of the capital were found to contain nine hundred offenders against the Imperial madman's arbitrary orders, for even the wearing of certain hats and coats of the French fashion was an offence punishable by imprisonment.

The general fear which he inspired pleased the Emperor, who was unable to perceive any danger in the ominous silence of his *entourage*—unlike his mother, who once expressed her-

self to the effect that she was not afraid of audible grumbling and murmuring, but of silence only. Even such an upright man as Count Panin was in favour of getting the Emperor to abdicate by means of a *coup d'état;* and, in the depth of night, he and Count Pahlen met together to discuss the matter with the Grand Duke Alexander. The idea was to induce Paul to abdicate on the grounds of ill-health.

Senators, commanders, and officers joined in this conspiracy, but General Benningsen, Count Zoubov, and Count Pahlen were the soul of it, and contemplated more drastic measures than Alexander would have sanctioned or Panin would have permitted himself to think of.

To his own undoing, the Emperor, in one of his unreasonable fits of fury, influenced by the insinuations made by Pahlen against Panin, banished the latter to his estate. This clever intriguer also succeeded in isolating the Emperor from his friends Rostopchin and Araktcheyev. The climax was hurried on by the Emperor himself, who threatened to incarcerate his wife and daughter and to banish his sons.

The suspicious nature of Paul I., which was always on the look-out for danger even where it did not exist, led him to turn his palace into a fortress surrounded by a moat with a drawbridge, and with cannon on the ramparts. All these precautions, however, could not save him from treachery within the walls. On the evening of 12th March 1801 the moment for striking came. The Grand Duke Alexander knew that as far as he was concerned his all was at stake : for him failure meant imprisonment ; success—a crown. While certain of the younger conspirators were penetrating into the palace, where bribery and treason had opened the doors, Count Pahlen was closeted with Alexander. The tension of this hour can be imagined ; relief could only be found in the thought that the nation had to be delivered from the tyranny of its insane ruler, the plan being that he should be forced to abdicate and Alexander appointed Regent during his father's lifetime. What actually followed was a hideous crime, which Rostopchin and Araktcheyev declared later on they would have prevented had they been on the spot.

When the Emperor, who was wakened out of his sleep,

refused to sign the document of abdication presented to him by the intruders, a struggle ensued. The unhappy man was stabbed and strangled to death. It was indeed truly said of him "that he had not enjoyed one moment's happiness, and that he died as miserably as he had lived."

When his son Alexander was informed of this awful and to him unexpected tragedy, he broke down completely; for this he was sternly rebuked by Count Pahlen, who reminded him that his duty was not to weep but to rule. When the news of the assassination reached the Empress she at once asserted herself, and, wishing to follow the precedent set by Catherine I., demanded that she should be made ruler in her husband's stead; she was, however, obliged to give way to her eldest son, to whom the army had already sworn allegiance.

It has been said that with the strangulation of Paul the stifled soul of the Russian nation was once more enabled to breathe freely. How true this is may be judged from a letter written by the late Emperor's daughter-in-law to her mother, in which she describes the events of that memorable 12th of March: "Certainly Russia will now be able to breathe again after her four years of oppression."

CHAPTER XIV

ALEXANDER, NAPOLEON, AND EUROPE

(1801–1825)

When the news of Paul's death reached Napoleon he was dismayed, for he felt that he had lost a valuable tool. England, on the other hand, rejoiced.

The young Emperor Alexander's desire was for peace so that he might have time in which to establish the reforms he had been planning while Grand Duke, and also to ensure the economic prosperity of his nation. He abrogated the "armed neutrality" which was so obnoxious to England, and wrote a personal letter to George III. just in the nick of time to avert war with Great Britain, who had been Russia's best customer for her natural products until the Emperor Paul severely handicapped the trade of his own country by declaring war upon her. In the meanwhile he also made peace with Napoleon, who sent his aide-de-camp to St Petersburg, where he was received most graciously by Alexander, an ardent admirer of republican principles. He thought to please the Frenchman by addressing him as "Citizen," little realising the changes that had been passing over France.

This visit had far-reaching results, as Count Panin, who was still Foreign Minister, concluded a convention in which, among other things, Russia and France mutually agreed not to give protection to political refugees—to Legitimists and Poles respectively. Prince Czartoryski, who hoped that in serving Alexander he might serve Poland too, bitterly resented the pact. He admitted that such an arrangement was perhaps natural between two Governments who wished

to be at peace with each other, but it boded no good to his country. Czartoryski, however, was assured by his Imperial friend that "the destinies of Poland were as dear to him as ever," and the Prince trusted in Alexander's sincerity.

Napoleon rightly called this short period of quiet a mere truce, for relations between the two countries were still strained. Very little was needed to provoke an outbreak of hostility, and grievances on both sides soon made themselves felt.

Not long after this the Emperor removed Count Panin from office, and even from St Petersburg itself, as he was a constant reminder to him of the conspiracy which had raised him to power. The new Minister of Foreign Affairs was Count Kotchoubey, one of Alexander's intimate friends, who tried to follow a policy of general goodwill towards all nations and of alliance with none. In this way he hoped to secure the rest the country needed so sorely in order to recuperate after the great wars of the last two reigns. The Emperor and his ministers were agreed that Russia had incurred great loss of time, money, and blood through participating in European complications. There was no necessity for doing so, and charity was now to begin at home : the nation was to have its full share of the Emperor's attention. Leave Europe to fight her own battles !

These pleasant plans, however, were not destined to be fulfilled ; for, first through circumstances over which he had no control, then quite against his own will, and later on in accordance with his changed will, the pacific policy of Alexander was turned into one of war, which resulted in glory for the Emperor himself and an increased prestige for Russia ; the nation, however, suffered.

The first link in this chain which was to draw Russia into the vortex of European politics was forged at Memel, where in 1802 the young Emperor and Friedrich Wilhelm III. of Prussia had an interview. A warm friendship sprang up between the two monarchs as a result of this meeting, but the foundations were also laid of further complications, as Alexander I. and Friedrich Wilhelm made certain compromising arrangements without the knowledge of their ministers.

After Kotchoubey's term of office, which was of very short duration, he was succeeded by Prince Czartoryski, who carried on the peaceful policy of political isolation with the definite ambition of seeing his beloved Imperial friend "arbitrator of peace for the civilised world." This minister, who possessed the Emperor's fullest confidence, aimed at reconciling Alexander's passionate desire for doing good with the nation's craving for military glory; in fact, Alexander's reign was to "inaugurate a new era of justice and right in European politics."

Although Alexander was delighted with Czartoryski's project, events did not favour its fulfilment. This scheme included the liberation of all Greeks and Slavs who were under a foreign yoke, and the introduction of justice and moderation in international politics. But the whole idea was far too Utopian, besides clashing with the ambitions of Napoleon, who himself desired to play the leading rôle and would brook no rival.

The spell of peace which Russia was enjoying was not destined to last long; she could not remain indifferent to such a violation of all the laws of justice as the execution by Napoleon's orders of the Duc d'Enghien, who had been seized in a neutral country. In consequence of this, relations with France were strained to breaking point, and negotiations with England were opened up.

For the first time in the history of nations it was proposed that European differences should be settled by international arbitration, and the honour of this suggestion is due to Prince Adam Czartoryski, whose friend and colleague Novossiltzev was sent in 1804 to England as special envoy. The instructions of M. de Novossiltzev contained the following suggestions: "The peace of Europe can only be preserved by means of a League, formed under the auspices of Russia and England, which would be joined by all the second-class States and by all those who really wish to remain at peace. In order that such a League should effectually resist the disturbers of peace and be firmly established, it is necessary that the two protecting Powers should maintain a certain degree of preponderance in the affairs of Europe; for they are the only ones

who by their position are always interested in order and justice being maintained, and who by their union would be able to maintain them."

In the secret instructions given him by Alexander and his Foreign Minister we find the following reference to Turkey: "The Ottoman Empire is another country whose fate will have an influence on that of the rest of Europe. The most intimate concert is necessary between Russia and England with regard to the line of conduct which should be adopted towards Turkey. . . . It will doubtless be desirable to arrive at some arrangement with regard to Turkey which shall be in conformity with the good of humanity and the precepts of sound policy; but it cannot at present be foreseen how far this can be done. . . . But if the Porte joined France (for one can never be quite sure of the sincerity of her professions)—if a war and its results rendered the further existence of the Turkish Empire in Europe impossible—the two Powers would regulate among themselves the future fate of the parties concerned. . . ."

Although the envoy did not succeed in settling all outstanding differences with England, a preliminary treaty was concluded in April 1805, according to which each Power was to make preparations for its share in the task of liberating Europe from the yoke of Napoleon.

When Alexander finally decided to go to war with France, it was not from any personal or selfish motive, but merely for the sake of punishing Napoleon for his violation of international law. He was alone in taking this stand; in fact, Russia was the only Continental Power in a position to do so: all the others were by this time in a state of dependence upon the goodwill of Buonaparte. Before war could be declared, however, an alliance with England was imperative. Thus Russia was drawn on to the chessboard of Europe, upon which the Corsican genius was moving his pawns at pleasure, removing castles and even humbling a queen, until he was checkmated by the flames of Moscow and by the ice of the Berezina.

The Emperor Alexander was destined to take a leading part in the shaping of events, but his personal attitude

towards Napoleon underwent fluctuations which settled down finally into a persistent and definite antagonism. Like most young men of his day who held liberal views, Alexander had been an admirer of the First Consul, though not of France or of anything French, the general tendency of the Russian Court at that time being to admire all things English. Alexander's friends and collaborators during the years 1801–1807 were all imbued with English ideals, and these strongly influenced the plans of reform now to be introduced into Russia.

The Emperor's admiration for Napoleon received a rude shock when the latter proclaimed himself Emperor; and when in 1805 he was also crowned King of Italy, Alexander thought it high time for the representatives of legitimate monarchy to unite against the usurper. The negotiations with England lasted for some time, as serious difficulties had to be overcome, Malta being one of the stumbling-blocks; but finally a compromise was arrived at and an alliance with England was formed, in which Sweden, Austria, and Naples also joined.

The war of 1805, however, did not bring about the desired limitation of Napoleon's power. The Austrian invasion of Bavaria failed, owing to the fact that the Russian troops arrived too late on the scene to save their allies. After this the Austro-Russian army was completely routed at the battle of Austerlitz, 1805. In consequence of this defeat the Emperor Alexander became extremely depressed, and even consoling messages from the Austrian Emperor failed to dispel his gloom. The latter paid a visit to Napoleon in his camp and sued for peace on the condition that the troops of his Russian ally should be allowed to retire with honour to their own country. A month later peace was concluded at Pressburg. Thus came to an end this first unsuccessful attempt to resist Napoleon's encroachment.

After the battle of Austerlitz, while the Russian Court was still smarting under the humiliation of heavy defeat, Czartoryski prepared a memorandum for the Tsar on the future policy and possible political combinations. It was clear to him that danger was to be apprehended from Prussia's attitude. He wrote: "I must repeat to your Majesty that

it is necessary to guard against too many concessions to the Berlin Court. The past has proved that Russia has nothing to gain from them, and that by trusting Prussia and blindly following her suggestions Russia will run a great risk. Such suggestions can be only in Prussia's interests, which are nearly always opposed to those of Russia and of Europe ; and by yielding here we shall assuredly be led to take steps which would deprive us of the respect of the world and of the attachment and confidence of our true allies. Meanwhile Prussia would continue to enlarge her territory and become a Power formidable even to Russia herself. . . . A war with Prussia is an event which circumstances must bring almost certainly sooner or later, and we should at once make our preparations for waging it with success. . . ."

In spite of the failure of the first coalition Alexander set to work to form another. In 1806 he formed an alliance with England, Sweden, and Prussia, the latter country taking the place of Austria. The King of Prussia was driven into this alliance by an outburst of patriotism among his people, who resented Napoleon's aggressive policy. The latter, however, did not give his enemies time to combine, and before the allies were ready he took the offensive.

Napoleon completely defeated the Prussians at Jena, entered Berlin, and thence marched on towards Warsaw, where he was joyfully expected by those Poles who were reckoning on his promised support for the restoration of Polish independence. The Russian army was not prepared ; money, too, had to be borrowed from England ; and thus, before Alexander could send his troops into action, Warsaw had been occupied. Prussia having been crushed, Sweden concluded an armistice, and the army of Napoleon wintered in the conquered country. In spite of the stubborn resistance of the Russian soldiers, which evoked Napoleon's genuine admiration, the Russians were obliged to retreat after the battle of Eylau, 7th February 1807.

Napoleon now began to make overtures to Prussia, but the King remained faithful to Alexander, declaring that he would not go back on his friend ; for the two monarchs had met again at Berlin, where, over the grave of Frederick the

Great, they swore an oath of eternal friendship. During the same visit they concluded the Treaty of Potsdam ; to this Count Czartoryski most unwillingly put his signature, any alliance with Prussia being contrary to his judgment.

Napoleon's Polish campaign (1806–1807) came to an end at the battle of Friedland, where Russia was defeated. Finally Alexander sent Prince Lobanov to treat with Napoleon, with the result that a meeting between the two monarchs was agreed upon. Although Czartoryski was no longer Foreign Minister, he took part in the peace negotiations, and was still able to influence the Tsar to a certain extent. The British ambassador wrote to him with regard to the danger of Alexander's concluding peace without considering the interests of Great Britain. He objected to a separate peace on the ground that it was bound to have undesirable results from which England might possibly not be the chief sufferer : England was willing to make sacrifices in order to bring about a permanent, sound, and equitable peace. He wrote that " anything that would weaken the bonds between Russia and England would be bad for these realms."

As Alexander had always drawn a distinction between the French as a nation and Napoleon as an individual, there was no insincerity in his instructing Prince Lobanov to convey his heartfelt thanks to Napoleon for his kind proposals : to assure him of his (Alexander's) desire for so close a union between the two nations as to blot out the memory of past disagreements. Alexander further desired his emissary to acquaint the Emperor of the French with his belief that a permanent alliance between France and Russia would ensure happiness and a world-wide peace.

As a result of these negotiations the Emperors met on 25th June 1807 on the river Niemen, where the encounter took place on a raft in midstream ; then at Tilsit, where the famous treaty was concluded which among other things deprived Prussia of her Polish provinces, which were converted into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and given over to be ruled by a Saxon prince. At the same time Alexander gained an increase of Polish lands. The question of partitioning Turkey was also raised ; Napoleon, however, refused

to sanction Constantinople coming under Russia's dominion, suggesting as an alternative the annexation of Finland, a piece of advice which Alexander followed.[1] At the same interview it was arranged that England, then allied to Russia, should be presented with an ultimatum, which it was hoped would force King George to make peace with France. It was also settled between Alexander and Napoleon that Turkey should be granted three months' respite in which to arrange terms of peace with Russia.

This Treaty of Tilsit, and the bond of friendship which was now uniting the Emperors of Russia and France, led to far-reaching results which were destined to affect the whole trend of Russia's development during the next five years. Commenting on this change of alliance, which was due to the initiative of Alexander, his biographer Shilder tells us that "romanticism gave place to 'Imperial egotism'; it was not the woes of Europe nor the ambition of Napoleon, but the interests of Russia alone, which he now really had at heart, and which were from henceforth to influence his actions."

This complete reversal of his former policy obliged Alexander to reorganise his ministry, and those friends and advisers who had so loyally worked with and for him during the early years of his reign were all politely dismissed. They had been Anglophiles, but Alexander now wanted a statesman capable of making the most of the new possibilities opened up by the alliance with Napoleon. Fortunately for Russia, such a man was forthcoming in the person of Speranski, who, while in sympathy with Alexander's new political creed, was able to assist him whole-heartedly in the carrying out of those plans of reform by which the Emperor hoped to benefit his people. This able statesman, who guided the internal policy of the Empire for the next five years, gave the people no reason to complain of the change of ministers.

In place of Kotchoubey as Foreign Minister, Alexander appointed Roumyanzev, who carefully carried out the twofold policy of gaining time and avoiding war.

[1] See Chapter XXVI., "Finland and her Relations to the Tsars."

Alexander, however, had not reckoned with popular feeling when becoming a party to the Treaty of Tilsit. The Russian people gravely objected to this sudden friendship with Napoleon, whom they regarded as Antichrist; the army also resented it, as indeed did everyone else. All classes, from courtiers to peasants, were in a state of fermentation, and instead of being as before the idol of his people the Emperor found himself an object of suspicion. His eyes were becoming opened to the duplicity of Napoleon, and he realised that the convention recently signed, which confirmed the Treaty of Tilsit, was bound to lead to new European complications. England would never agree either to Napoleon's Spanish schemes or to Russia's annexation of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Finland—in fact, war with Great Britain was inevitable. The secret arrangements between Napoleon and Alexander made the fulfilment of the latter's hopes as regards the possession of Constantinople as remote as ever; for he had reckoned on gaining possession of Constantinople with Napoleon's aid, but "the key with which he had hoped to open the door of his house was once again withheld."

The new Russian Ambassador to France succeeded in procuring, by means of bribery, copies of Napoleon's plans with regard to Europe. Alexander learnt from them that Napoleon considered Russia "the natural enemy of France and the natural friend of Austria, and that because of this Russia must be deprived of all political influence and rendered incapable of interfering with Napoleon's ambitious plans." Yet in spite of this information, and in the face of national opposition, Alexander persisted in his alliance with France. He not only refused Austria's suggestion to enter into an alliance with her, but as Napoleon's ally he was obliged to attack that country. He caused his troops, however, to make only a pretence of warfare.

During the years 1808 to 1812, Russia, as the ally of France, also waged war on England, Sweden, and Turkey; in fact, with the last Power war had been carried on practically without cessation, with this difference, that before Tilsit it had been waged without opposition on the part of England,

and later on in spite of it. The Balkan States and the Dardanelles both played their part in Russia's perpetual struggle for supremacy in the Bosphorus. But in 1809 the Treaty of the Dardanelles was concluded, which closed the Bosphorus to all foreign warships.

By 1810 relations between France and Russia had become decidedly strained. Napoleon's action with regard to Poland, which he had virtually converted into a French province, with a constitution modelled on French lines and an army under the command of French officers, caused many misgivings in the heart of Alexander I. The annexation of Holland and Oldenburg, whose ruler was Alexander's brother-in-law, called forth an official protest from Russia. Further, the Court of St Petersburg was offended at Napoleon's marrying an Austrian princess instead of continuing the negotiations he had begun in Erfurt for the hand of the Tsar's sister. Napoleon, on the other hand, was irritated by Alexander's commercial reforms, which, prohibiting as they did the import of certain articles of luxury and putting a heavy duty on wine, dealt a severe blow to the export trade of France. He was also furious with his ally for refusing to act upon his suggestion to seize all neutral ships found in Russian waters, with a view to injuring British trade. In this matter Alexander followed the advice of Count Speranski, then Secretary of State, who was a firm believer in the policy of free trade advocated by Adam Smith, and who also saw that Napoleon's "continental system" was threatening the trade of all countries, especially of Russia.

Although as yet ostensibly allied, both France and Russia began to prepare themselves for the conflict which was gradually becoming inevitable.

The Peace of Bucharest, meanwhile, had been concluded in 1812 between Russia and the Porte, the latter having been advised by Great Britain to come to terms. Russia agreed to restore the principalities of the Danube, but retained Bessarabia with the fortress of Chotin and Bender. Alexander had also made peace with Sweden, to which country he offered Norway, then a Danish possession, in exchange for Finland. Finally an alliance was entered into with England,

which Sweden joined; as a counterstroke Napoleon secured the support of Austria and Prussia. Contrary to his nature, Alexander I. for the next six years consistently carried out one idea—that of completely crushing Napoleon: "I or Napoleon: we cannot both rule at the same time," was now his motto. By this unexpected persistency he completely upset the calculations of such a fine connoisseur of human nature as Napoleon. Metternich and Hardenberg, too, had speculated on the weakness of Alexander's character. It was a great surprise to them to find this gentle, amiable, and weak monarch capable of such tenacity; for neither defeat nor disaster made him swerve from his purpose to deliver Russia and Europe from "this enemy of humanity."

At last all preparations for the inevitable contest were completed. There, on the one hand, stood Napoleon, grimly determined to rob Russia of her independence and to chain her to his triumphal car; on the other hand, Alexander, filled with the noble ambition to deliver Europe from the oppression of the arrogant usurper and to restore to her rulers all they had been deprived of. He also made on his own account an attempt at the restoration of Poland by proposing at the eleventh hour to carry out Czartoryski's suggestions with regard to his native country, hoping thereby to secure the support of a loyal and united Poland. But the Tsar's overtures were made too late—Russia's chance had come and gone.

The actual rupture took place in March 1812, when Napoleon joined his army at Dresden and Alexander his at Vilna. This was the first move in the great game of chess in which the interests of all Europe were involved. Russia's military preparations were, however, much less perfect than her Emperor had imagined: her four armies proved utterly unable to withstand the onslaught of Napoleon's troops or to prevent him from crossing the Niemen with his forces, which stretched from Tilsit to Grodno. Napoleon had not reckoned in vain on the support of the Poles, who hailed him as their liberator; but they soon found to their cost that they were merely being used as a cat's-paw in the Imperial war-game.

Now that the French troops were already on Russian soil, matters began to look terribly serious ; but in his letter informing the Governor of St Petersburg of the invasion Alexander writes : " I have the fullest confidence in the zeal of my people and the bravery of my soldiers. Menaced in their homes, they will defend them with their wonted firmness and intrepidity. Providence will bless their just cause. The defence of our country, our independence, and national honour has forced me to unsheathe the sword. I will not return it to the scabbard as long as a single enemy remains on Russian territory."

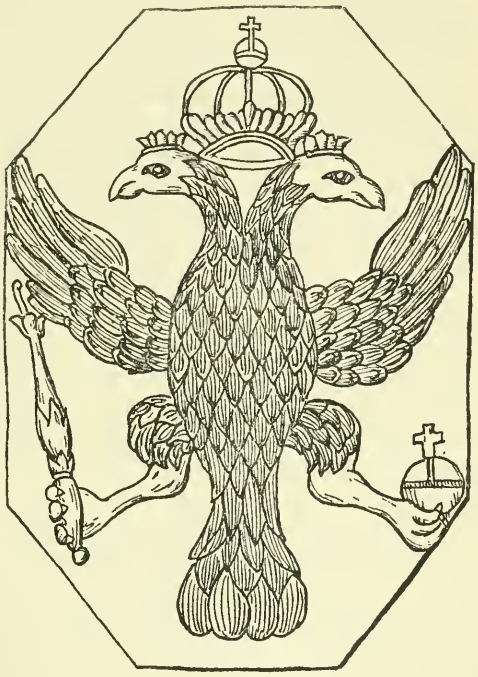
To gain time Alexander tried to open negotiations, but Napoleon refused even to read the Russian proposals, declaring that he would conclude peace only under the walls of Moscow ; for he was convinced that Russia was hastening to her doom. It was then that Alexander issued the manifesto to his people in which he called to their remembrance the Great Deliverance of 1612, when, under the leadership of Minin and Pojarski, they had driven the foe out of their land. His appeal met with an enthusiastic response ; in fact, this definite ending to Alexander's hesitating policy was hailed with joy on every side, for to the Russian people Napoleon was the arch-enemy of mankind. A wave of loyalty and patriotism swept over the nation—every man vied with his neighbour in supplying the necessary men and means.

On the advice of his ministers, who had told him that his presence at home was urgently needed, while in reality they dreaded lest he should interfere with the military arrangements, Alexander returned to his capital.

The Russian generalissimos—Barclay de Tolly and Bagration—did not agree as to tactics : the latter was in favour of taking the offensive ; the former of retreating in order to draw the enemy on and thus separate him from his base. This was a game the local peasantry could thoroughly understand and enter into ; they willingly burned their towns and villages and stopped up the wells, taking refuge with their cattle in the forest. To the Old Russian party such tactics were incomprehensible, and pressure was brought to bear

upon the Tsar to place Field-marshal Prince Golenistchev-Koutousov in command, over the head of Barclay de Tolly, who, however, remained on in the army, willingly and cheerfully serving under his successor.

The new commander in his turn avoided giving battle as long as possible, but was finally forced to do so at Borodino on the Moskva, eight hundred versts from the ancient capital — the "Heart of Russia." This terribly sanguinary battle was not decisive: Napoleon lost thirty thousand men and about fifty generals killed or wounded. But when Koutousov realised his appalling loss of fifty thousand men, besides officers, he gave the command to retreat towards Moscow, in spite of the Emperor's orders to the contrary, and during the night he made a flank movement in the direction of Ryazan.



Double-headed Eagle.

(Carved centre-piece on the ivory throne presented to Ivan III. (1462–1505), Grand Duke of Muscovy, by Byzantium on the occasion of his marriage with Sophia Palaelog, heiress to the last Emperor of the Eastern-Roman Empire.)

The Governor-General of Moscow, Count Rostopchin, had made preparations for the contingency of Napoleon's entrance into the city. All the treasures had been removed; the inhabitants had received notice to evacuate their houses, and fire-extinguishing apparatus had been taken away. Before he left Moscow, Rostopchin gave orders that all prisoners and lunatics should be set at large, preferring that "Mother Moscow" should be destroyed by Russian hands rather

than that it should fall into the hands of the enemy. He wrote to this effect to the Emperor, assuring him that "Napoleon will find nothing but the empty shell," which he did indeed find to his cost when he entered Moscow on the 14th September 1812.

At this juncture Alexander issued another manifesto to the Empire: ". . . Let there be no pusillanimous depression; let us swear to redouble our courage and perseverance. . . . The enemy is in the centre of Russia and not a Russian has yielded to his power. . . . Meanwhile our forces increase and press on him. Shall we then yield when Europe is in admiration at our exertions? . . . In the present miserable state of the human race, what glory awaits the nation which after having patiently endured all the evils of war, shall succeed by the force of courage and virtue, not only in reconquering its own rights, but in extending the blessings of freedom to other States, including even those who have been made the unwilling instruments of attempting its subjugation!" And a little later on, speaking at the Kremlin when the fire had done its work, he said: "May Europe, freed from the yoke of servitude, speedily come to bless the name of Russia!"

Various theories exist as to the origin of the terrible fire which broke out only a few hours after Napoleon had settled in the Kremlin; but whatever may have been the cause of it, the fact remains that all means for extinguishing it had been previously removed by order of the Governor-General.

The burning of Moscow continued for sixty-five days. But this fire, which proved the beacon of liberty for Russia, was the signal of disaster for Napoleon; for those days in the burning city saw the beginning of the terrible sufferings of the "Grande Armée," which comprised contingents from twenty different nations. In answer to the Emperor's stirring appeal to his people, "Unite with the cross in your hearts and the sword in your hands, and no human power shall prevail against you!" the whole country rose in arms: the peasants under the leadership of their owners, citizens led by retired officers, Cossacks and Kalmucks, joined, and all attacked and harassed

the enemy on every side. Supplies were cut off and isolated units destroyed. Owing to this fierce and irregular warfare, in addition to hunger and cold and the fact that winter was approaching, Napoleon found himself in such a desperate plight that he was forced at last to appeal to Alexander for an armistice. This was curtly refused, with the intimation, "For the Russian army the campaign has hardly begun."

It seems as if the utter failure of his plans had deprived the great commander of his habitual presence of mind and clearness of judgment. He wasted precious time in making fruitless plans while the Russian winter was drawing nearer and nearer. On 19th October the evacuation of Moscow began, the last troops to leave blowing up the principal buildings; only the churches in the Kremlin were spared.

A few days later Count Rostopchin returned to the devastated city, which before his orders for evacuation had numbered two hundred and forty thousand inhabitants, to find only three thousand, and these on the verge of starvation.

The invader retreated from Moscow along the very route which his advancing troops had devastated only a month or two before. The crossing of the Berezina, when twenty thousand of his soldiers were drowned, or killed by the hands of franc-tireurs, and attacks made from time to time at any advantageous opportunity by the three Russian army corps, led to the destruction of Napoleon's army and the ruin of his presumptuous ambition. He returned to Paris, leaving all that remained of his "Grande Armée" to struggle on as best they could, and on 7th January 1813, only eight months after Napoleon had crossed the Niemen to invade Russia, that river was recrossed by the pitiable remnant of his defeated hosts. Russia was liberated! and in memory of this great deliverance, the Emperor had a medal struck, inscribed with the words: "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name. . ." (be glory).

After this sudden and unexpected end to Napoleon's invasion, and after having seen the last of his enemy's forces

cross the Russian frontier, Alexander would have been justified in sheathing his sword. It was the opinion of the majority of the Emperor's advisers that he had done his share of the work, and that Western Europe should now disentangle herself from the net into which she had been drawn. These men considered Russia's interests only, while a small minority advised Alexander to persist in his aim of first crushing Napoleon and then reorganising Europe in concert with his allies.

Chief among the men who urged him to continue with the war was the Freiherr von Stein, who hoped to deliver Prussia with the help of Alexander. It was, to some extent, the result of his influence that, instead of remaining satisfied with the deliverance merely of his own realm, Alexander decided to carry on the campaign. This decision had momentous and far-reaching consequences for the rest of Europe.

Alexander crossed the Niemen at the head of his troops, and while his soldiers were driving the French out of Poland he was making an offensive alliance with Prussia for the purpose of driving Napoleon out of Europe. He promised not to lay down his arms until Prussia had been restored to the status she had enjoyed before 1806. Austria still held back from accepting the invitation to join this alliance against Napoleon, as Metternich feared that she would run the risk of being crushed later by the Russian Colossus.

At Breslau, where Alexander and Friedrich Wilhelm met, the allies issued a proclamation to all the European princes urging them to join with them in making war against "the enemy of humanity."

Napoleon meanwhile had been raising a new army, and when Prussia declared war on France (17th March 1813) he entered Germany and won several victories, but acceded to the request for an armistice by the allies, who were fairly nonplussed by the turn of events. During this truce the allies received reinforcements and supplies. Bernadotte, Napoleon's former general, now King of Sweden, joined the alliance; England gave shelter to the Russian fleet, and, besides promis-

ing a sum of money, accepted the responsibility for a part of a loan floated in Russia. The whole aspect of affairs had changed in these six weeks, and, although the allies had refused to listen to Napoleon's proposals with regard to a compromise, they were genuinely anxious for peace and offered him very moderate conditions at the Congress of Prague, where Austria acted as mediator. Eventually, however, the Congress ended in failure, and Napoleon's insulting attitude towards Austria made war inevitable. At the end of the armistice, which had been prolonged by a few weeks in view of peace negotiations, hostilities broke out afresh—this time with Austria as Russia's new ally. A Russian contingent was attached to each of the allied armies, whose arms were crowned with success, and the defeat of Napoleon at the battle of Leipzig nearly brought the career of the Great Usurper to an end.

Eleven days after this battle Napoleon recrossed the Rhine, upon which the South German principalities and Denmark joined forces with his enemies. The allied monarchs entered Frankfurt, where they held a congress to decide upon future developments. Alexander and Metternich differed greatly in their views as to dealing with Napoleon. Metternich was in favour of clemency, while Alexander—whom Metternich looked upon as a semi-Jacobin and an unpractical dreamer—thought it wiser to settle matters once for all. As the Emperor's opinion carried most weight, the march to Paris was decided upon.

While the invasion of France was proceeding, the allies were attacking Napoleon's troops at various other points; in fact, the pressure brought to bear upon the French from every side led to the capitulation of Paris on 30th March 1814. Alexander promised safety to the city, and was received with great rejoicing and enthusiasm. To restrain the spirit of revenge in the hearts of the Russians, who longed to retaliate for the burning of Moscow, Alexander sent a message to his troops, in which he said, among other things: "Our enemies, by piercing to the heart of our dominions, wrought us much evil; but dreadful was the retribution: the divine wrath crushed them. Let us not take an example from them;

inhumanity and ferocity cannot be pleasing in the eyes of a merciful God. Warriors! I trust by your moderation in the enemy's country you will conquer no less by generosity than by arms; and by uniting the valour of the soldier against the armed with the charity of the Christian toward the unarmed you will crown your exploits by keeping stainless your well-earned reputation of a brave and moral people."

The Emperor succeeded in preserving strict discipline in his army, thus saving the terrified French peasants from outrage and plunder. All the time he was there the people kept holiday, and his word, "Not Paris, only Buonaparte is my enemy—the French are my friends," flew from lip to lip. France forsook her Emperor and declared herself willing to accept the legitimate King in his place. So Louis XVIII. was restored to his throne by the allies without opposition; while Count Shouvalov accompanied Napoleon to Elba.

Having arranged matters so far, Alexander left Paris for England, and a few weeks later he returned to Russia, where he was hailed with enthusiasm. The Senate offered him the title of "The Blessed," which he modestly refused.

A few months after his return he entrusted his Empire once more to the care of his former tutor, Count Saltykov, while he went to Vienna in order to participate in the Congress called for the purpose of definitely settling the affairs of Europe. It was a brilliant gathering, in which all that the world had to offer of allurement, pomp, and glory was displayed. Ostensibly it was Alexander who took the lead in all the deliberations, but the wirepullers were Metternich and Talleyrand. Among other readjustments of territory, that of Poland was divided for the fourth time. Alexander wished to unite all the parts of the kingdom of Poland into an autonomous State. England and Austria opposed these plans. Thus his generous intentions for the Poles came to naught; but the chief objections to the Emperor's proposals were made, not by Austria and Prussia, who would have had to surrender their Polish possessions, but by Lord Castlereagh, who feared so great an increase to Russia's power and influence.

Peter the Great in his Costume as a Skipper in place of the flowing Tatar Robes worn up to the time of his reforms.

He insisted on the maintenance of the *status quo* ; for he knew that Russia would never agree to an absolutely independent Poland, a state of things which he would have considered preferable.

During this Congress relations between Alexander and Metternich had become so strained that on December 14th all intercourse was broken off between them, the latter making an alliance with Castlereagh to prevent any further increase of territory on the part of Russia and Prussia, which countries consequently had to be satisfied with half of what they had demanded. The news of Napoleon's escape from Elba brought about temporary reconciliation, and the alliance against " Buonaparte," as opposed to France, was renewed.

Napoleon's reign of one hundred days came to an end with his defeat at Waterloo. The Russian troops did not take part in this battle, as they entered France only after the abdication of the Emperor. A second Treaty of Paris was drawn up in November 1815. Alexander and the Duke of Wellington did their best to safeguard the city against the vandalism of Blücher, who wanted to blow up the Pont d'Iéna ; but they were unable to prevent the looting of the Museums, which were stored with treasure taken by Napoleon from the various German towns.

It was during his second visit to Paris that Alexander astonished the world by propounding a scheme for a unique alliance which had been in his mind ever since the battle of Leipzig. This " Holy Alliance," he hoped, would usher in an era of peace.

After the fire of Moscow and the subsequent deliverance of Russia, Alexander had become a distinctly religious man ; according to his own confession, he had consecrated himself to the furtherance of the glory of God. He persuaded his allies to join with him in carrying out the ideal of basing political relations on the teaching of the Gospel, which was to be the only line of conduct in international as well as domestic policy.

Such principles had not been enunciated by any ruler since 847, when the sons of Louis le Débonnaire had taken

an interest in the welfare of their "common kingdom," and had publicly urged the necessity "to live in peace and harmony as demanded by the laws of fraternity and the will of God."

Love and goodwill, justice and righteousness, were to reign among nations and rulers, who were all to be counted members of one Christian family. The three signatories to this remarkable document, who were absolutely sincere in their intentions, promised to look upon themselves solely as instruments of Divine Providence. All Powers willing to accept the principles laid down in this document were welcomed into the "Holy Alliance" with "the greatest heartiness and brotherly love."

The Papal States and England refused to sign. Lord Castlereagh, on behalf of the latter country, replied that the English Parliament was composed of practical men who were willing to vote subsidies and join alliances for offensive or defensive purposes, but that they would not sign a declaration containing merely scriptural principles, which would be nothing less than a reversion to the times of the saints of Cromwell.

The world, however, was not yet ready for this kind of millennial rule, and it was not very long before Alexander himself flagrantly contradicted by his actions that to which he and his friends had solemnly subscribed; indeed, under the influence of Metternich this alliance degenerated into a league of kings against nations.

Before the monarchs separated they agreed among themselves to meet periodically to discuss any plans they had been formulating in the meanwhile for the furtherance of their peoples' welfare and for the maintenance of the peace of Europe.

After the Congress of Vienna a new chapter opened for Russian Poland. It was constituted by Alexander an autonomous hereditary kingdom in perpetual union with Russia; he restored to it the famous constitution of 1791, to which Catherine had so strongly objected. Alexander assumed the title of King of Poland, and appointed his brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, commander-in-chief of the Polish army,

which was to consist of fifty thousand men. It was a great disappointment to Prince Czartoryski that he was only made Senator instead of being appointed Viceroy, as he had hoped. The man to whom this post was given lent himself later on to the enforcement of certain measures which violated the constitution, thus preparing the ground for another Polish rising. In the meanwhile, however, Poland enjoyed a few

Russia after the Congress of Vienna.

years of peace and rest under the constitution so generously granted by Alexander.

It seems as if the inherent weakness of the Emperor's character reasserted itself as soon as his aims with regard to Napoleon had been achieved. Shilder calls this "period of congresses" which follows, and which lasts from 1816 until 1825, a "period of reaction." In fact, Alexander's foreign policy was more or less confined to congresses, where deliberations were held on international or domestic problems common to all States at that time. At the gatherings at

Aix-la-Chapelle in 1818, at Troppau in 1820, at Laibach in 1821, and at Verona in 1822 the monarchs tried to regulate affairs in Europe on the principles laid down by the Holy Alliance. They believed that they were acting as guardians of the welfare of the peoples of Europe; but, as a matter of fact, it soon became apparent that it was their own welfare that they were guarding, and the outcome of these royal assemblies was merely the establishment of their several monarchies on a firmer footing, and the suppression of every liberal movement. The Holy Alliance ended in discord in the year 1821.

Alexander had during the course of years altered his views as to the blessings of a limited monarchy, and had arrived at the point of considering it his duty to "preserve autocracy and to hand it on, in an unlimited form, to his successors." These retrograde principles were strengthened in Alexander by the influence of Metternich, who was always scenting out revolution. Being persuaded by the latter that the rising of the Greeks of 1821 was merely a revolt against their legitimate sovereign the Sultan, Alexander refused to accede to his nation's demand for active and energetic interference on behalf of their brethren and co-religionists. He thus failed to justify the hopes which the Slav peoples had placed in him as the traditional protector of all Balkan Christians against the attacks of Islam. It was purely fear of lending aid to a revolutionary movement which restrained the Emperor at this juncture; Greeks were massacred, Patriarchs hanged, and the treaty of Bucharest violated. Yet Alexander sacrificed the cherished privilege of so many reigns to his new political creed.

In this crisis he found himself isolated, for his opinion was shared by nobody; the Old Russian party, to whose wishes and prejudices he had sacrificed so many of his plans for reform, were now against him. The Emperor failed to realise the intensity of national feeling, while the people could make nothing of his sudden *volte face*—a Russian Tsar championing the Sultan of Turkey was beyond all comprehension!

The terrible flood of St Petersburg in 1824 and the unexpected death of Alexander in the following year were con-

sidered by the devout Russians as a divine punishment on their Emperor for his failure to come to the rescue of his oppressed co-religionists.

When Metternich heard of Alexander's death he summarised the foreign policy of his reign in the following words : " Ou je me trompe fort, ou bien l'histoire de Russie va commencer là où vient de finir le roman."

Medal struck by Alexander I. in 1812 in commemoration of the Deliverance of Russia from the Hosts of Napoleon.

CHAPTER XV

THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY : THE REGENERATION OF RUSSIA

"THE shouts of joy and the hurrahs of the crowd are still ringing in my ears ! " wrote the new Empress of Russia, for the news of the Emperor Paul's death was the signal for such an outbreak of uncontrolled rejoicing that a wave of hysterical hilarity seems to have swept over the land. Friends fell on each other's neck ; strangers shook each other warmly by the hand ; the spirit of holiday-making was in the air, and the very atmosphere seemed to be impregnated with joy and gladness. The nightmare which had been oppressing the nation suddenly vanished away. Many a bowed head was raised by the new-born assurance of personal safety and hope for the welfare of the nation. " Our wounds are healing, we can breathe again, no longer need we be afraid to think and speak of what is just and right. Let us bless the present time, and may it last as long as we do ! " So wrote Zavadovski in his memoirs.

The nation rejoiced and with glowing hearts the people welcomed their new ruler. But what about his feelings ? Perhaps they are best expressed in the words of his wife : " He is absolutely crushed," she writes, " by the death of his father and by the manner of it. His sensitive soul will for ever be lacerated by this terrible memory ; his care for his people's welfare, the thought of what must be done for them, will be his only support ; nothing but this can give him the strength he is so greatly in need of—for in what a condition has he received his Empire ! "

Thus the new Emperor began his reign with the blessing of his people ; but that which brought such joy to them was

a source of untold grief to him, for all through life the terrible crime to which he owed his accession to power cast its shadow over his soul.

At the age of twenty-four Alexander I. entered upon his arduous duties as ruler of the great Russian Empire. The principal reason for his being welcomed so heartily by the nation was that he was known to hold liberal and humanitarian views. So great were the hopes centred on this young man that the news of his accession was looked upon by many as a "message of salvation." All those cultured Russians who had been living abroad in voluntary exile now returned in the full assurance of a hearty welcome.

Much has since been written about this Emperor whose personality was predestined to have so deep an influence on his era. The great vacillation which his policy manifested, both at home and abroad, his political alliances as well as his wars, were all dictated by the different spiritual currents which swayed him from time to time, and the sudden transitions and vacillations between two opposite views were but the reflex of the Emperor's moods and emotions. As he was of such a pliable nature, it was fortunate for Russia that the influences of his childhood and youth were directed towards the development of high and good ideals.

Shilder, a conscientious student of his personality and actions, and his most exhaustive biographer, divides the reign of Alexander I. into three distinct periods: the first, from 1801 to 1810, usually called the "Epoch of Regeneration," he prefers to describe as the period of "vacillation," which is as apparent in his home as in his foreign policy. This may be due to his natural timidity having been accentuated by the difficulty of his position between his grandmother and his father. In his endeavour to please and satisfy both he may have learned to waver and compromise and ultimately to do what was most politic.

Catherine II., who had loved this grandson with an absorbing love, had entrusted his education to men cultured in the highest sense, and amongst them it was the Swiss Laharpe who was destined to exercise a deep-rooted and far-reaching influence. This tutor instilled into the open and responsive

soul of his Imperial pupil conceptions of humanity and liberty as well as his own belief in republicanism. Until his eighteenth year Laharpe was able to influence Alexander, who had by that time become strongly imbued with high and noble ideals. This intercourse was temporarily broken off, for the Empress made a clean sweep of all who favoured republican France.

It was just about this time that the Grand Duke met Prince Adam Czartoryski, a Polish hostage for whom Catherine had conceived a great liking. The two young men soon became friends, as they shared the same noble aspirations. To the Polish prince it was a joyful surprise to find Alexander so liberal-minded ; in fact, Czartoryski found it necessary to convince the Grand Duke that some of his ideas with regard to the future government of his nation were too radical. One of the things to which Alexander was opposed was hereditary rule ; he considered it imperative that for a position of such responsibility the most suitable man should be elected.

In his memoirs Prince Czartoryski gives a delightful description of Alexander in his young days: "He loved gardens and fields and the rustic beauty of village maids, and he rejoiced in the labours and occupations of country life with its simplicity and retirement." His friend also describes him as having charm of manner, sincerity, and simplicity, which won him friends wherever he went. In later years, when the Emperor's good faith was doubted, Prince Czartoryski always maintained that Alexander I. had been absolutely genuine when in his youth he had professed his intention of bestowing a constitution upon his people as soon as he should become Emperor.

The actions of the young ruler during the first days after his accession to the throne were an earnest to the nation that a new era had begun. He proclaimed an amnesty, recalled political exiles, and restored to office those who had been deprived of their positions. Thus in the first few days of his reign twelve thousand families were made happy. Besides this, all the printing works which had been closed down since 1800 were again opened, and all prohibitions of the import of books were rescinded. Every class of society had some

reason for rejoicing: nobility and burgess had those privileges restored of which his father had deprived them, and the peasants were again permitted to gather wood in the forests belonging to the Crown. Priests were granted immunity from corporal punishment; the pillories, on which the names of those disgraced by the Emperor Paul had been inscribed, were removed; and the "Secret Expedition," a kind of inquisition or secret police, which had been an instrument of terror in the hands of Paul, was abolished. The prohibition to travel abroad was withdrawn; to all Russian subjects was granted full liberty to wear whatever they liked in the way of hats and cloaks; and the soldiers were delivered from the hated wigs and queues.

Only when one considers how capricious the reign of Paul I. had been, and how the liberty of the subject had been reduced to a mere name, can these measures of relief be fully appreciated. The evil days of Paul were buried in oblivion: injustice, violence, were done away with, and all that was good and right was to have free scope.

One of the first problems the Tsar had to deal with was, what should be done with regard to the men to whom he owed his crown. During the first few weeks of his reign the three leading spirits of the conspiracy—Count Pahlen, General Benningsen, and Count Zoubov, the "Triumvirate" as they were generally called—wielded a certain amount of power. Alexander found himself in an awkward predicament, for he could hardly punish everybody who had taken part in so widespread a conspiracy, more especially as he himself had indirectly participated in it.

The fact that Alexander I. did not at once severely punish the instigators and the actual murderers of his father led many to believe that he was an accessory to the crime; but this has been proved a calumny. One by one the Tsar removed the members of the Triumvirate from St Petersburg; they were forced to live in retirement on their estates, and many of the officers concerned in the conspiracy were transferred to Caucasian or Siberian regiments. Alexander's position with regard to these men was far from easy, and their presence must often have been painful to him. A

French contemporary, describing an official ceremony at which Alexander I. was present, writes: "In front of the young Emperor walked his grandfather's murderers, behind him those of his father, and around him those who might one day be his own."

Alexander called home those of his friends who were abroad at the time of his accession. He formed a Committee of Reform consisting of his friends Count Strogonov, Nicolai de Novossiltzev, and Count Kotchoubey; Prince Czartoryski acting the sympathetic onlooker, as, being a Pole, he felt himself an outsider. This committee, which was mockingly called the "Secret Council," met in the evening in the Emperor's private apartments to discuss the great schemes of reform planned by Alexander. The different training and gifts of these friends of the Emperor fitted them for the task of assisting him in working out his plans for benefiting his people. It was Count Strogonov who drew up the proposals for reform which were to bring justice and liberty to Russia.

Alexander's ideal at that time was to rule as a limited monarch, and, in reply to a lady who asked him a favour with which he could not comply without acting unjustly, he wrote: "Although I can put myself above the law, I will not, because I do not recognise as legitimate any power which does not emanate from the law . . . there must be only one law." The medal coined in memory of his coronation is symbolical of his ideals and tendencies: on the one side is represented his likeness, on the other a pillar bearing the simple inscription, "The Law." On the pillar rests the Imperial crown, and over it are these significant words: "The law is a blessing to each and all."

At his coronation the Metropolitan of Moscow addressed solemn words of warning and advice to the Emperor. Among other things he urged him always to uphold truth and righteousness, and never to let himself be turned from these by flattery or wickedness, which he should make it his aim to keep away from his Court. He reminded the Tsar that he would need exceptional wisdom with which to rule his vast Empire so as to make the best possible use of the great opportunities God had placed in his hands.

The unofficial Committee of Reform set to work and evolved various schemes, of which some at least became law. In order to form a nucleus for a future constitutional body, the young Emperor endeavoured to infuse new life into the Senate which had been created by Peter the Great. The duty of this assembly had been dual—to promulgate laws and to see to their execution. The Emperor, however, was free to issue a ukase even when the majority of the Senators had voted against it.

Theoretically the Senate was to wield unlimited power, but Alexander did not always practise what he preached, and eighty-three times out of two hundred and forty-two he promulgated his edicts in spite of the opposition of the majority. It sometimes happened in the earlier days of his reign that the Senate, taking him at his word, ventured to persist in an independent course, but soon found that such proceedings only irritated the Tsar. Eventually his friends came to the conclusion that the Emperor would gladly let everyone do what they liked so long as they liked to do what he wished.

As the administrative machinery of the Empire was cumbersome and intricate, Alexander decided to simplify it by means of centralisation and unification. In order to effect this he created eight ministries, each of which was to be presided over by a minister in co-operation with an assistant or colleague. This system of two men holding an office jointly did not run smoothly, and was probably introduced with the sole idea that each of the two would keep an eye on his co-worker. Alexander appointed his intimate friends, the members of the unofficial Council, as ministers and assistant ministers. Strangely enough, he appointed Derjavin, the poet-laureate of his grandmother's reign, Minister of Justice.

The Ministry of " National Enlightenment," or Education, more than justified its creation. Alexander appointed as minister the educational adviser of Catherine I., Count Zavadovski, and as his colleague the Emperor's former tutor, Professor Mouraviev. Every attempt at promoting education met with the most whole-hearted and practical support from the Tsar, and in every branch of scholastic life real progress began to manifest itself.

In order to stimulate the translating of such works as those of Adam Smith and others, Alexander spent in one year alone one hundred and sixty thousand roubles saved out of his personal expenses. Indeed, throughout his reign extravagance was never encouraged by his Court, for he always expressed the view that money, as far as possible, should be put to productive uses.

The Emperor's example in encouraging education by means of grants was followed by many of the great princes and rich merchants, by provincial and municipal associations, by the higher clergy, and even by Tatar chiefs. Thus large sums were spent on prizes for literary effort and in the establishment of museums, etc.

In spite of all that had been done by Catherine the Great, Russia badly needed more schools and of a different class, the educational conditions being still most unsatisfactory.

Three universities, in St Petersburg, Kazan, and Kharkov, were added to the three existing ones. In opening the University of Dorpat, Alexander I. only redeemed the promise made by Peter the Great at the time when the Baltic provinces were joined to Russia.[1] The University of Kazan was to spread its influence eastward ; that of Kharkov southward ; and so on. Each of these seven universities, under the direction of a curator, was to form the nucleus of a scholastic district. In this way centres of light and culture were created, whose rays should penetrate the dense darkness of ignorance. Prince Czartoryski, whom Alexander appointed curator of the old-established University of Vilna, made excellent use of this opportunity of furthering education in his beloved native country, the welfare of which lay always near to his heart.

During the reign of Alexander two thousand elementary schools and two hundred and four gymnasia or high schools for boys were established in different parts of the Empire ; thus Russia was fairly launched on a career of culture and enlightenment.

Even the reforms of Catherine had not provided a solution of the Russian educational problem, for lack of cohesion

[1] See Chapter XXIV., " The Baltic Provinces."

was proving a hindrance to the system of higher education. Also it seemed impossible to bring into line the various aims set before the different kinds of schools. But the most crying need of all was for students and teachers : the universities were languishing for want of students and the schools for want of teachers ; some radical change, it was clear, must be made to remedy this defect.

As Russia had not been able hitherto to produce native professors, foreigners—mostly Germans—had to be called in to supply their place. Latin was to have been used as a medium for teaching, but the students' ignorance of this classical language made the plan useless, and the lectures frequently had to be retranslated into German or French. An unsuccessful attempt was made to train Russian professors at the three older universities, and finally a *modus vivendi* was found by sending to German universities twelve of the most promising students, who on the completion of their course of study became professors. This experiment proved so successful that, after a time, the Government found it possible to dispense with the services of foreigners.

All these numerous attempts at regulating the educational system of the Empire led to a systematic differentiation of the various schools : the curriculum of the gymnasia was enriched by instruction in Latin and Greek, and thus they became known as " classical schools " intended for the preparation of boys for a university career.

Great hindrance to the working out of these reforms was found in the attitude of the parents of the commercial classes. Many of these petitioned against the teaching of any other subjects than reading and writing, as they considered all other knowledge superfluous. The nobility, on the other hand, preferred to send their children either to military establishments or to private schools. In order to induce them to send their sons to the gymnasia the Government made it compulsory that no language but French should be spoken in these institutions, while drawing and fencing were also made part of the curriculum.

The other great problem yet to be solved was that of the serfs—a problem which the Emperor frequently talked over

with his friends ; but even amongst them, progressive though they were, opinions differed as to whether a gradual or a sudden change of status was preferable. In any case, it was only a question of granting personal liberty—the idea of giving the freed serfs land as well was never even thought of until a generation later.

To prevent the separation of families the Emperor promulgated a ukase in 1804 which prohibited the sale of individual serfs. They could only change masters when the land changed hands. He also abolished the owner's right to arrange marriages between his serfs, thus granting the latter liberty of choice in their life's partner. He also passed certain laws restricting the judiciary power of the masters, and limited the punishment by flogging to fifteen strokes. Serfs were also delivered from the sole jurisdiction of the masters, and it was decided that one million roubles should be set aside annually for the redemption and liberation of serfs.

These minor reforms of the Emperor were disappointing to those who had expected a radical change ; but he feared the storm of opposition that such measures would raise among the owners. His intentions were excellent, but it was in practical execution of plans that he was wont to fail.

Prince Czartoryski, whose love and loyalty were above suspicion, was forced sadly to admit that the Emperor lacked both the will-power and sufficient moral courage to pass such an unpopular measure. In apology for his royal friend he wrote : " The Emperor did not consider himself sufficiently master of the situation to risk introducing such drastic reforms." But there was no certainty that even the small measures of relief passed in 1804 would be put into practice, for by whom were they to be enforced ? There was no organisation to see to the faithful application of the law, and under the very walls of the Emperor's palace human beings were continually being sold like cattle.

The conscience of Russian society, however, was beginning to awaken, and the liberty and toleration enjoyed during the earlier years of Catherine's reign were now bringing forth fruit.

In the year 1807 several alterations were made in the *entourage* of the Emperor, whose foreign policy had undergone a complete change. After the Peace of Tilsit, the old friends and collaborators, whose sympathies had been English, were set aside, and someone had to be found to take their place who would be in full sympathy with Napoleon's French ideas. Such a man was Speranski, later on Secretary of State, one of the finest representatives of his nation.

The son of a poor priest, he had been through the seminary and had then become Professor of Mathematics at the Ecclesiastical Academy of St Petersburg. He did not, however, enter the Church, as was customary for the son of a priest, but accepted the post of private secretary to one of the ministers of the previous reign and then stayed on under his successor. The Emperor Alexander became acquainted with him when, on one occasion, Speranski had to make a report in place of the Minister for the Interior, Count Kotchoubey, whom sickness had prevented from personally attending to business. The Emperor was greatly struck with the personality of this remarkable man, and a friendship soon sprang up between them.

The confidence Alexander placed in Speranski resulted in rich blessings to Russia. Alexander had found one whose character and nature were in many respects the complement of his own, who was just the fellow-labourer he urgently needed. Speranski synthesised the Emperor's vague, fluctuating ideas of reform and brought his concentrated energy to bear in bringing them to fruition ; he had a fine, supple mind, and was a prodigious and methodical worker. Thus the Emperor, with his impulsive and unmethodical ways, found a corrective in his indefatigable minister, whose clear-sightedness, power of concentration, and executive ability brought order and stability to the well-meant but fluctuating and sometimes chaotic ideas of the generous Tsar.

During the next few years, which form the second phase of Alexander's reign, and which Shilder describes as a period of experimenting, Speranski did his utmost to prepare the ground for those organic reforms which were especially calculated to bring greater cohesion and uniformity

into the government of the vast Empire. Speranski admired the administrative organisations of the Emperor of the French. His legislative reforms were, to a great extent, based on the Napoleonic Code, which had been carefully studied by a legislative commission of which Speranski was a member. Adapted to Russian needs and in a Russian form, these laws, imbued with the French spirit, were now to be applied to Russia.

In his suggestions for legal reform, which were fully approved of by the Emperor, Speranski carried out the ideas enunciated by Catherine II. in her famous "Instructions." He even went a step further, laying down the maxim that "no Government is legitimate unless it is founded on the will of the nation." But in this he was only developing Alexander's own ideas as to the necessity of limiting the absolute power of the Sovereign.

As a first step towards the introduction of political liberty it was imperative to liberate the serfs in order to prepare the mind of the nation for this far-reaching change, Speranski authorised the publication of a pamphlet entitled "The Agreement between Proprietors and Peasants." According to the ideal of Speranski, the people were no longer to be the slaves of their owners, nor were the owners to be the slaves of the sovereign. In fact, until the existing unhealthy conditions should be changed, no real progress was possible in any branch of national life.

The English form of government, with its powerful aristocracy, made a strong appeal to Speranski, who aimed at introducing the same system into Russia. As a preliminary he proposed to limit the membership of the nobility by conferring it only on those who had reached the four highest grades or "Tchins" of the bureaucratic hierarchy. Only those were to enjoy the special privileges of nobility; the rest, however, were to be free to call themselves noble as heretofore, but would merely form an upper middle-class, out of which they might rise to the status of the privileged aristocracy by doing the State good service.

Speranski's carefully worked-out plan for the reorganisation of the whole administrative system of the Empire was divided

Costume of Boyars in the 17th Century.

into three distinct departments, each subdivided into grades. First, the Legislative, beginning with the communal village council and ending with a national Duma, with the Imperial Council as the final Court of Appeal: for the present the Imperial Council was to be the central body, and above it the Emperor. Secondly, the Judiciary, beginning with a village tribunal and ending with the Senate as the supreme tribunal. And, thirdly, the Administrative, beginning with the village starostas and ending with the eight ministerial departments, whose chiefs were to form the Council of Ministers responsible to the Tsar himself. Thus by means of centralisation he hoped to ensure cohesion and co-ordination, but in deference to the Emperor's timidity Speranski suggested a gradual introduction of this vital reorganisation.

The creation of the Imperial Council, which actually took place in 1811, should have led to the establishment of a limited monarchy; that it did not do so is due to the character of the Emperor, of whom his friend Speranski regretfully remarked: "He does everything by halves: too weak to rule, he is yet too strong to *be* ruled!"

The Senate also had to undergo reconstruction in order to render it more efficient. Speranski suggested an increase to the Senate, till then appointed by nomination, by adding several elected members, besides all the ministers and their colleagues. In view of the vast expanse of the Empire, Speranski suggested the subdivision of the Senate into four sections, only one of which was to sit in the capital, the others in various other centres.

These last proposals met with violent opposition in the Imperial Council. Some members objected to the elective principle as incompatible with autocracy; others considered it dangerous to change so venerable an institution as the Senate, which had served its purpose so well for the last hundred years. In spite of opposition, however, the reform was passed, but the outbreak of the great war against Napoleon prevented it from being carried into execution.

Speranski's code of laws was not passed—his adversaries considered it derogatory to the Russian nation to adopt anything so foreign—but his scheme of financial reform was

accepted. It included the calling in of a great part of the paper money, the starting of a sinking fund, the establishment of an Imperial Bank, and publication of the Budget. He suggested new taxation, and, as a believer in free trade, proposed the abolition of duty on raw material; but in order to foster home industries he imposed heavy duties on imported luxuries.

The position of the Secretary of State was a very difficult one, as his reforms clashed with the interests of so many people. In 1811 he tendered his resignation, which, however, Alexander refused to accept; but gradually his opponents succeeded in undermining his position, and, as the Emperor's views had for the second time during his reign undergone a change, it was perhaps natural that the minister who had carried out the wishes of Alexander during the phase which was now drawing to a close should no longer be wanted.

A false rumour reached the Emperor's ear that Speranski was favouring Freemasonic principles, and that his reforms would undermine autocracy, which Alexander had come to consider must be preserved intact. The Emperor's personal vanity also asserted itself, for some of the frank criticisms of his friend had been reported to him. The final rupture took place suddenly. Alexander wept at the last interview with his faithful friend, whom, notwithstanding, he dismissed without a word of warning, and banished to a distant eastern province.

Speranski preserved in adversity the greatness of soul that he had shown in prosperity, indeed, he fully justified the epitaph placed on his tomb: "In adversis sperat."

That Speranski had been able to get through such an immense amount of work during his five years' term of office is due to his all-round efficiency, combined with a marvellous gift of concentration. Although he laboured so incessantly, often for eighteen hours at a stretch, he never began his day's work without a quiet time of spiritual refreshment. It was during these hours that he translated Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* into Russian. He had all the gifts of leadership, yet was faithful in little things. In spite of his versatility and the multiplicity of his duties, he never lost

his perfect equanimity. Neither success nor failure could unbalance his mind : quietly and steadily he pursued his way.

He did much for Russia, and his merit has been of late years generously admitted ; but he was in advance of his time, and tried in vain " to introduce the future into the present."

In 1816 he had, however, the satisfaction of being publicly cleared of all the unworthy charges which had been brought against him, and a ukase in which he was completely exonerated from all blame was issued by the Emperor himself, who said of his old friend and adviser : " Everyone now knows as well as I do all that Russia owes to him ; and the tongues that spake against him have long been put to silence." He was appointed Governor of Siberia, where he introduced several important improvements in the conditions of life there, and succeeded in winning the love of the people. In the next reign he was destined to carry out many of the plans which now for the time being failed.

During the early days of the nineteenth century a wave of spiritual hunger and divine discontent had been sweeping over the country, and all the people, high and low, from Emperor to peasant, were in search of some means with which to satisfy this newly awakened craving and found it in different ways, according to locality, opportunity, and level of culture.

The attitude of Alexander I. towards religion has been condemned or approved by various critics, according to the individual point of view held by each : some writers have made him out to be a consummate hypocrite, others a perfect saint. The truth lies between these two extremes. At one time Alexander " cared for none of these things," but then came to him a time of spiritual awakening and of seeking after the things of God, and what the Emperor said and wrote during this period came straight from his heart and was the result of genuine conviction. The Emperor of Russia had nothing to gain in favouring " Mysticism," or " Pietism " as it has been called, or in acting the part of a religious man. The fact is that Alexander's soul was dissatisfied, his conscience never at rest, and his mind always full of ideals. To

quote his biographer, Shilder: "Alexander could never be satisfied with a formal religion."

The one who was first to open to him the "comfort of the Scriptures" was his friend Prince Alexander Golitzin, of whom the historian writes, "From a Saul he was turned into a Paul," and who became a supporter and protector of that spiritual and evangelical movement which was beginning to make itself felt.

The fearful and wonderful deliverance from the enemy, the fire of Moscow, and the destruction of Napoleon's great army opened the Emperor's eyes to the fact that "salvation and glory are from God, alike for nations as for Kings." To quote Alexander's own words: "Through the fire of Moscow my soul has been enlightened, and God's judgments on the ice-fields have filled my heart with a warm glow of faith such as I have never before experienced; for it was then that I learned to know God as He is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and as soon as I understood and knew His will and His law I resolved to consecrate myself and my Government to Him for the furtherance of His glory. From that time on I became a different man."

There was no pretence about his religious fervour, and before the battle of Leipzig he and the King of Prussia knelt down before God in prayer.

What his principles were at this time can be judged from his proclamation to the army on their entering French soil *en route* for Paris in 1814. He desired that his soldiers, too, should follow in the steps of Christ as he was trying to do. He appealed to his soldiers to refrain from retaliation and barbarity in the enemy's country: "Let us forget what our enemies have done to us; instead of animosity and revenge, let us approach them with words of kindness, with the outstretched hand of reconciliation. Such is the lesson taught by our Holy faith. . . ."

The State Church, with its formalism, was unable to satisfy this newly awakened spiritual hunger of the nation; and in Russia, as in all other countries, this condition of affairs led to the rise of numerous sects—sects representing all kinds and shades of doctrine, which were either developing

out of those which already existed, or were forming on entirely new lines.

There were thus distinct streams upon which those souls who craved for a more living and simple faith were carried along. Schismatics, or the Old Believers, had long since subdivided into various offshoots ; for, later on, Catherine's toleration had enabled them to exist without let or hindrance, and in many places an unofficial compromise had been arrived at with the local clergy.

At this period, however, a new kind of sectarian movement developed—the so-called " Evangelical," of which the chief representatives were the Molokanes in the south of Russia. The adherents of these sects read the Bible, believed in justification by faith, and witnessed by their upright and moral life to the genuineness of their faith and the soberness of their doctrine. While other sects were characterised by the extravagance of their doctrine and practice, the Doukhobortzi, or " Spirit-wrestlers," were akin to the Society of Friends, members of which came all the way from England to inquire into their teaching.

In the drawing-rooms of the capital every new prophet or prophetess, every ecstatic visionary was discussed, then visited, and in the end generally found a good following. So did also the Roman priest, Johannes Gossner, whose sermons were listened to with rapt attention, but whose Evangelical faith soon forced him to leave the Church of Rome and also Russia. Others, again, sought to find in French and German philosophy that for which their souls craved. But, whatever form this seeking after truth might take, all craved for some practical outlet for their newborn faith and humanitarian principles.

This was quite a new phase in the social life of Russia : philanthropy became the fashion, and indeed there was enough scope for it, and the societies which were formed found plenty of material upon which to work.

The honour of having opened the Emperor's eyes to the terrible condition of the prisons is, however, due to an Englishman, Venning by name. This philanthropist had had the privilege of meeting the Emperor in the house of his brother,

a cultured English merchant and an earnest Christian, whom Alexander occasionally visited in order to spend a few hours in friendly intercourse. On one such occasion Mr Venning asked the Emperor's permission to visit the prisons in Russia, as he took a special interest in them. The request was readily granted by the liberal-minded, generous Tsar, but on condition that Venning should make a personal report of all he had seen. This unique opportunity was used with excellent results, and resulted in the formation of the Society for the Welfare of Prisoners in St Petersburg, under the presidency of Prince Alexander Golitzin.

A few years later on, an auxiliary branch was started in Moscow, the centre of the prison and exile system for the whole Empire. In this town it was a German, Doctor Haas, who, on becoming a naturalised Russian, had entered the service of the State. He loved the Russian people with a whole-hearted devotion, and worked with untiring zeal for the benefit of the prisoners and for the thousands of unfortunate men and women who passed through Moscow on their Via Dolorosa towards Siberia—sent there by their owners or by order of the tribunals.

At this period both Moscow and St Petersburg were favoured in having Metropolitans who were in sympathy with spiritual revival, and they welcomed the suggestion of the British and Foreign Bible Society that a branch should be started in Russia. John Paterson, the agent of the London Society, had already been able to organise work in Finland, and had received a grant of £500 towards Bible distribution from the Tsar, who was "inspired with the desire to assist in promoting the circulation of Holy Scriptures."

Mr Paterson arrived at an awkward moment in Moscow—just when the Governor, Count Rostopchin, had issued orders for the evacuation of the city on the approach of Napoleon. The Englishman had to leave almost immediately for St Petersburg, where he presented his credentials to Prince Alexander Golitzin, at that time Procurator of the Holy Synod, who gave him a hearty welcome and the promise that his proposals with regard to the British and Foreign Bible Society should be laid before the Emperor at the earliest opportunity.

Alexander manifested such genuine interest in this matter that, although on the point of setting off to join his forces in their pursuit of the retreating French armies, he actually postponed his departure in order to study Mr Paterson's proposals. The very day on which Russia was absolutely delivered from her foe, and Napoleon crossed the Niemen, the Emperor sanctioned the free entrance of the Bible into his Empire and the establishment of a branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society. "So be it—Alexander," he wrote on the document laid before him by his minister.

A few weeks later an Imperial ukase legalised the beneficent organisation which was to supply, in co-operation with the Holy Synod, the Russian nation with the hitherto practically inaccessible "Word of God." The inaugural meeting was held in the house of Prince Golitzin, and was attended by the highest ecclesiastics of the State Church, as well as by a Roman Catholic Bishop, by Cabinet Ministers, nobles, etc. During the first year a fund of sixty thousand roubles was raised on behalf of the Society, and of this sum twenty-five thousand roubles were given by the Emperor himself, who also promised an annual subscription of ten thousand roubles.

A Russian Bible Society was also founded in Moscow with the object of providing gospels for all the Slavonic peoples. The demand for these by the troops was so great that in 1816 one hundred thousand copies could easily have been distributed had they been ready to hand. Prince Golitzin, as President of this Society, wrote to Lord Teignmouth, the President of the British and Foreign Bible Society: "Entire Governments, whole dioceses, raise their voices to our Committee and entreat us to satisfy the hunger of millions of our countrymen—a hunger which the distribution of the lively oracles of the living God has excited. . . . All support our Society . . . clergy . . . even peasants give us of their poverty. . . ."

In 1815 the Emperor met Baroness Kruedner, the person who for some time at least was to exercise over him a great spiritual influence which has been adversely criticised by many of his biographers.

To this lady Alexander granted an interview at

Heilbronn, on his way to Paris, after the Congress of Vienna. He was going through a time of great spiritual and moral stress. He had heard from a friend of the Baroness's zeal for the kingdom of God. He describes their first meeting in a letter to a friend in the following words : " As soon as I heard she was asking to be admitted, I received her at once : the words she addressed to me were fully in accord with my spiritual condition, for, although full of reproof, they also comforted me and cut through the tangled web in which I had been held so long."

It was to the man, the sinner before God, that this lady spoke, oblivious of the fact that before the world he was the Emperor of Russia. She told him that he had not yet confessed himself a sinner, and that until he did so he would never find peace for his soul. This conversation lasted for three hours, and marked the beginning of a new phase in the Emperor's life and reign. On his suggestion Baroness Kruedner followed him to Heidelberg, and later on also to Paris. The *entourage* of the Emperor quickly perceived a change in him. There was a marked contrast to his ordinary behaviour—he withdrew as much as possible from the gaiety around him, and instead found all his pleasure in the study of the Bible and in attending Bible readings held by a devout Swiss pastor.

It has been suggested that the idea of the Holy Alliance was entirely due to Baroness Kruedner ; but that was not the case. Alexander showed her the draft only after it was already drawn up, but it is true that she strongly supported his ideas.

The Great Deliverance of 1812 brought with it also an awakening of the national and political consciousness. During this campaign many Russian officers came into actual contact with Western civilisation, which hitherto had been accessible only to those who had travelled abroad. They fraternised with the German students, whose ideals and aspirations had sprung from a revival of national feeling, which had led to the formation of the " Tugendbund " or " League of Virtue " ; in this and kindred associations patriotism and the desire for political freedom were blended. In Paris the Russians held

intercourse with men who still believed in liberty, equality, and fraternity.

During their prolonged stay in foreign countries the young Russian officers learned to think and reason and to appreciate a more serious mode of life than they had been accustomed to at home. When these young men returned to their native country they realised the difference between it and the countries they had just left, and decided to work together for a national regeneration, in full assurance of the Emperor's sympathy. Several societies were founded, one of which, " The Union of the Faithful Sons of the Fatherland," later on became that of " Public Welfare " ; but it died out in 1822, owing to the lack of a definite political programme. They were also able to base their political aspirations on the views which had been expressed by the Emperor, who, although he changed in many respects during the twenty-four years of his reign, was three times on the verge of granting a constitution to Russia, and had actually given this privilege to Finland in 1809 and to Poland in 1818.

In 1801–2 this idea of Alexander formed the topic of many discussions between himself and his intimate friends ; in 1809 he even wrote about his plan to George Washington, from whom he received a copy of the American Constitution. Speranski, at that time the Emperor's collaborator, worked out for him a full plan of political reform : this able minister foresaw the consequences of delay in granting the constitution—he read the signs of the times, and hoped to prevent bloodshed in the future. In his draft of the constitution he writes : " At every epoch the form of government must correspond with the degree of civic enlightenment to which the State has attained. Whenever the form of government is too slow, or too fast, to keep pace with this degree of enlightenment, it is overthrown with more or less commotion : thus time is the origin of every renovation in politics. No Government which does not harmonise with the spirit of the times can ever stand against its powerful action. How many calamities, how much blood, could be spared if the rulers of nations would observe with accuracy the movements of public opinion, if they would conform to the principles of

their system of policy and adapt the government to the state of the people, instead of adapting the people to the government!"

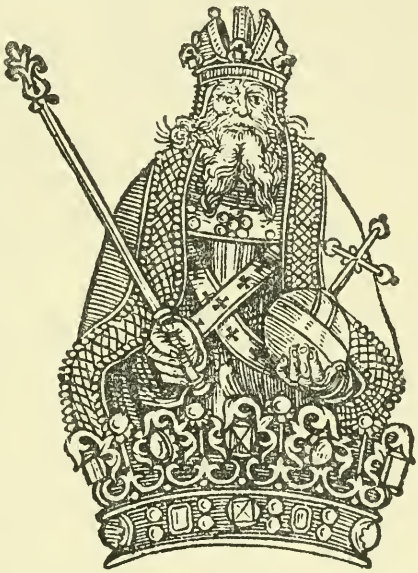
Speranski's proposal, however, was not accepted; for the Emperor's personal convictions with regard to constitutional rule were not strong enough to allow of his forcing through a measure which the partisans of autocracy opposed. Still, in 1815, on his visit to London, the Emperor discussed this matter with certain English politicians; and even as late as the year 1819 he once more considered the subject.

Even after this idea was beginning to fade from his mind, he said to a faithful friend, who had to report to him on a mutiny of the Semeonovski regiment: "You have been in my service since the beginning of my reign, and you know that I have shared and encouraged these illusions and errors. Therefore it is not for me to be severe to them!" Yet he became severe, for at this moment reaction was setting in—the fall of Speranski had heralded the third and last phase of Alexander's reign. His place as chief political adviser was taken by Count Armfeld, while the post of general adviser, vacated by the disgraced minister, was only too soon filled by the bigoted and sinister Araktcheyev, who had already been the bad adviser, though faithful servant, of the Emperor Paul, and who during the first years of Alexander's reign had had no influence, although he had been appointed Minister of War.

The next period is stamped with the personality of this man, under whose influence reaction became the order of the day, and which was nourished by the Emperor's principles—worked out by him in the Holy Alliance—so well meant, yet destined to enchain the nations. It was only when the Emperor had come to a state of disillusionment—of "an incurable *degoût de la vie*," as he called it—that Count Araktcheyev became Alexander's evil genius. He intrigued against the frank and generous Count Speranski and later on against Prince Golitzin; finally, he succeeded in isolating the Emperor from those of his collaborators of the preceding period who, in sympathy with his noble aspirations, had worked only for the welfare of the people.

It was always a puzzle to the Emperor's entourage, and

even to his biographers, wherein lay the key to Araktcheyev's influence. It may have been in the fact that he never criticised the actions of Alexander, who always craved approval; but it may also have had something to do with his lack of initiative, for Araktcheyev was merely a willing tool, with only one ambition, and that to make himself indispensable. Extremely bigoted and severe to the point of brutality, he served his Imperial master with whole-hearted devotion, and as time went on he became so powerful and so above attacks by opponents as to be justified in the proud assertion reported to have been made by him: "I am the Emperor's friend; therefore, any complaints about me can be made only to God."



METROPOLITAN OF MOSCOW.
(From Herberstein's *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, 1549.)

It is characteristic of Alexander's state of mind at this time that Araktcheyev's sinister personality was able to dominate him as completely as had, a few years previously, the luminous personality of Count Speranski, of whom Araktcheyev remarked: "Had I only half his brains, I should be by this time a truly great man." These two names are typical of the two aspects of Alexander's reign, namely, progress and reaction; for although there was often no sequence in his actions, there was always a distinct link between them and the character of his advisers. Speranski appealed to the higher side of his nature, Araktcheyev to the lower; the former to the idealist, the latter to that element of cruelty so often found in the sentimentalist.

Metternich came to the conclusion that the Emperor's

mind underwent a distinct change every five years, which he called a "periodical evolution of mind." This unique phenomenon is clearly traceable in his actions both with regard to home and foreign politics, and may perhaps be the cause of the alternation between periods of spiritual awakening and periods of darkness. It was as if the Emperor forgot all he had been most eager about in the previous phase, the new idea having apparently taken such a hold of him as to become an obsession. This may help us to understand the otherwise perplexing duality of his character.

Alexander, who hitherto had been a leader—in fact, the Agamemnon—among the monarchs, became the unwitting tool of that masterly diplomatist, Metternich.

This clever, purposeful statesman, to whom the very thought of revolution was like a red rag to a bull, knew how to utilise for his own ends the disillusionment following on the failure of the Emperor's cherished ideals, which had centred in the Holy Alliance. Alexander's motive in starting this alliance had been "love to God and man"; but he was bitterly disappointed at not achieving the desired results, and he was in this state of mind when Metternich got hold of him. "I have the Emperor safely at anchor," he writes; and explains why Alexander had lost the position of leader in the following words: "He has lost his advisers; he distrusts his army, his ministers, his nobility, and his people. In such a state of mind one cannot lead." Metternich worked on this new tendency to suspicion, at the same time playing up to the Emperor's idealistic ambitions, making him believe that in crushing every movement towards freedom he was "hindering the rule of evil."

Thus the Tsar, from being a supporter of progressive and liberal principles, became an upholder of reaction and obscurantism. Yet it was still idealism which caused him to change, though now it was guided into wrong channels. His advisers during this new phase were as different from his former ones as they could possibly be. It seems as if Alexander lost his power of judgment, and Araktcheyev's and Magnitzki's bigotry were mistaken for true religion. Even Prince Golitzin, an honest and genuine Christian, had been

taken in by the professions of religion of the once notorious freethinker, Magnitzki.

In his capacity of Minister of Education, Golitzin suggested this man to the Emperor as Curator of the University of Kazan; but he was only nursing an adder in his bosom. Magnitzki's real or pretended zeal was to become the spade by means of which all the new plants of intellectual life were to be dug out of Russian soil. During his term of office he dismissed eleven professors, forbade others to mention Buffon; Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton being also placed on the forbidden list. His craze was to "bring education into conformity with the principles of the Holy Alliance"; but this he did to such an extent as to render the very name of religion ridiculous. The professor of political economy was commanded to teach his subject after the manner of St Paul; lectures on mineralogy had to be intersected by prayers and chanting.

Golitzin's fall was soon brought about by Araktcheyev and Magnitzki. Unfortunately for Russia, their obscurantism found favour with Golitzin's successor, and the Ministry of "Public Enlightenment" was in danger of rapidly becoming one of "national darkness." The new head was Admiral Shishkov, who was an enemy of all reforms and considered elementary education not only useless but even harmful.

The University of Kharkov was deprived of two and that of St Petersburg of four professors, who were dismissed simply for teaching the subjects which they had been appointed to instruct. New restrictions were added year by year, and in 1822 the University of Dorpat was forbidden to accept anyone as a student who had been abroad; by 1823 it had become illegal to go abroad for study, and in 1824 a knowledge of political economy was considered superfluous. These measures were especially unfortunate, as it had cost so much thought and labour to create and keep alive the universities. It was Shishkov also who introduced that ruthless censorship by means of which he did his utmost to dim the light of Russia's newly awakened intellectual life.

Since the days of Catherine a new generation had been growing up which, especially during the first part of Alex-

ander's reign, had had free scope for development. The first quarter of the nineteenth century is rich in men of fine character and strong personality, who, each in his own sphere, tried to live up to the ideals which he had set before him; and art, literature, and science spread their wings for an upward flight.

If during the reign of Peter the Great the Russians began to learn what work meant, and if Catherine encouraged them to intellectual effort, it was left to Alexander I., in his turn, to give an impetus to the emotional and spiritual side of their nature.

The same humanitarian and philanthropic tendencies and political aspirations which, at this very period, in England blossomed forth in the Evangelical revival, the abolition of the slave trade, and the opening up of an era of philanthropic and political activity, in Russia were doomed to be nipped in the bud by the frost of reaction. Araktcheyev and his *confrères* did not favour the Tsar's attitude of toleration with regard to a freer religion, nor did they like the Russian Bible Society; they agitated against it so successfully that Prince Golitzin was ousted from his position of President of the Russian Bible Society, to be replaced by a nominee of their own, under whom that Society's activity came to all but a total standstill. Just as, during Golitzin's term of office, his co-workers had been the best and most enlightened members of the Russian hierarchy, so now the opponents of progress and spiritual enlightenment completely got the upper hand.

This "factotum principal de l'Empereur," as Araktcheyev was aptly called by a foreign diplomatist, soon became the most powerful, but also the most hated, man in the Empire. His name is especially linked with the system of "military colonies," which were generally supposed to have originated with him, though the Emperor laid claim to the authorship of this idea; at any rate, the manner in which the scheme was worked out by Araktcheyev justifies the hatred it aroused against him.

Alexander's idea had been to enable soldiers in time of peace to enjoy family life, and also to provide them with agricultural labour, and, incidentally, to relieve the military

budget. Regiments were to be given land in certain parts of the country; the soldiers were told to marry the daughters of the neighbouring peasants, and the sons born to them were to become soldiers in their turn. Thus the soldier was to be an agriculturalist and the agriculturalist a soldier. In theory this scheme appeared benevolent and beneficent: in the working out it became a curse. The peasantry resented this quartering of soldiers on them and objected to such compulsory marriage of their daughters, and especially to the loss of liberty which the strict military discipline entailed. This chafed them past endurance.

Araktcheyev, a regular martinet, laid down rules for every detail of life: everybody had to wear uniform—even the children; men were forced to have their beards cut off, etc., etc. In this craze for regulating everything he even drew up rules for the mothers of the future soldiers. He prepared thirty-six rules which these women were to hang up beside their ikon, and which they had to obey with the utmost exactitude. He commanded them to attend a weekly meeting in the church, where the village priest had to instruct them in their duty towards their children—a kind of "mothers' meeting," perhaps the first on record, in Russia at least.

Drilling and forced labour, such as the felling and carting of timber—for Araktcheyev had a mania for building,—took up so much of the time of the hapless members of these military colonies that agriculture was neglected and the people were frequently reduced to starvation.

The fearful severity with which Araktcheyev's rules were enforced led to frequent disturbances and riots, and at last a memorandum "on the protection of the people against Araktcheyev" was sent up to the Tsar. However, in spite of this protest, this system of military colonies was still carried on in various parts of the Empire, and by 1825 one-third of the army had been thus settled on the land.

The model colony which was on Araktcheyev's own estate was ruled with a rod of iron by his mistress, who had been the wife of a sailor. She exasperated her serfs to such an extent that they mutinied, and the imperious Anastasia was

killed by the infuriated people. The Emperor, ministers, and courtiers wrote letters of condolence to the bereaved Araktcheyev, who was so utterly distraught with grief that for a time he lost all interest in State affairs.

Although conditions changed later on, the first quarter of the nineteenth century was, nevertheless, one of tremendous progress ; for what such men as Count Speranski and Count Roumyanzev (the Mæcenas of that period) did for education, literature, and art could never be entirely undone, however great might be the power of reaction. A new life had begun and new chords had been struck in the soul of the nation. Periodicals and journals, as well as political works and novels, were produced. For the first time Russian literature became truly national. Ryleyev wrote on things which had happened in days gone by, and Karamsin produced *The History of the Russian State*, in which some of the great historical treasures of the nation were revealed for the first time ; it was indeed a revelation which strengthened the national consciousness.

Perhaps the most popular writer of this period was Griboyedov, who in a satirical comedy, *Gore ot Ouma*—"The Sorrows of too much Learning,"—represented contemporary life. His heroes were living characters whose counterparts in real life were well known to everybody. Griboyedov's types became as famous in Russia as did those of Dickens in England, and their remarks became epigrams. This comedy, in which the evils of every class of society were exposed with inimitable wit, was not permitted to be either printed or performed, yet everyone read it, copies being made by hand. Later on, however, the author gave it into the hands of the censor, who expurgated it of all that had made it living and true, and in this form it was published and put on the stage.

In spite of this spirit of reaction which prevailed during the latter part of the Emperor's reign, and in spite of censorship and of galling restrictions which crippled the output of Russian literature, the intellectual life of the nation could not be quenched. The men of Russia had begun to think for themselves and to acquire knowledge and culture : it could not be expected that these men, who had stepped out in the

dawn and were longing for the full light of day, should fall back without a struggle into the night of ignorance from which they had just emerged.

The stirring of this new life resulted in the creation of social unions and literary societies : the idea, however, was not a new one, for several such had been formed during Catherine's reign, and, although towards the end of it Freemasonry had been forbidden, the Emperor Paul in his reversionary policy had revoked the prohibition ; nor was Alexander averse to it. It was especially after the return of the army from France that so many of these unions sprang up : many officers—of the Guards, for instance—belonged to some literary society. These gatherings, however, often ended in political discussions : it frequently happened that unions started on an intellectual or humanitarian basis, gradually developed into political organisations, and this as the logical outcome of the repressive measures which banned humanitarian efforts. Such were " The Sons of Russian Knights " and " The Union of the Faithful Society of the Fatherland." The latter underwent many changes and ultimately became " The Union of Public Welfare." During this phase its members carried on their activities under four heads : some had to keep a watch on all philanthropic undertakings ; others furthered the moral and spiritual education of children, by example as well as by precept ; a third party occupied themselves with the study and superintendence of the judiciary system ; while a fourth busied themselves with political economy : economic prosperity, industry, commerce, etc., were to be encouraged in every way, and the Government monopoly of drink was to be fought against.

All these regulations were contained in what they called " The Green Book." The members of this society and its branches were all cultured men, mostly officers. The best men, possessing the highest ideals, belonged to these unions. Genius, talent, birth were richly represented among them. At first they had felt sure of the Emperor's sympathy, as his liberal views were well known to all ; but when, under the influence of Metternich, his views changed, these idealists and the Emperor parted ways : he standing on the side of

retrogression, they on that of progress—he the champion of autocracy, they longing for a constitutional Government.

It was owing to this state of affairs that, out of the unions already mentioned, evolved " The Union of the North," which aimed at introducing a constitutional monarchy, and that " The Union of the South," which favoured republicanism, and whose able leader was Colonel Pestel, had come to the conclusion that " those countries which had not a revolution continue to be deprived of many rights and much liberty: therefore, Russia required the cleansing and regenerating influence of a revolution in order to bring about government by means of a constitution, which alone would guarantee safety and stability."

" The Society of the Re-united Slav People " aimed at a federation of all the Slavonic nations. It was the first time that Panslavism, formulated as a creed, entered the arena of politics. This society was in close touch with patriotic Polish societies. Thus the military classes were honeycombed with political circles. A few individual members even went so far as to advocate violence against the person of the Tsar, but this was never encouraged.

Finally a conspiracy was organised, and Prince Troubetzkoi was nominated provisional dictator. There was not much secrecy about the methods of these conspirators, who freely discussed the situation of the country and expressed their conviction as to the need of urgent reform.

The news of this threatening danger first reached Alexander through an Englishman, Sherwood, a non-commissioned officer whose father was foreman in a Moscow factory. He had accidentally found out the existence of a plot, and considered it his duty to inform the Emperor in person of what he knew ; but at the same time he made use of this unique opportunity to tell him of the general suffering and discontent caused by the system of Araktcheyev, and of the many evils in need of redress.

Alexander received the same warning later on from other sources, but in spite of this he took no steps with regard to it, although the knowledge of the existence of such a conspiracy distressed and embittered him.

It is an interesting phenomenon that the members of this first organised attempt at revolution were all members of the privileged class. Count Rostopchin, commenting on this, said : " Usually it is bootmakers who stir up a revolution in order to become grand seigneurs, but in Russia it is the grand seigneurs who desire to become bootmakers." The fact was that noblemen had been made democratic by the régime of absolutism. Before, however, this conspiracy came to fruition, the Emperor died. The delicate health of the Empress made it imperative for her to spend the winter in the south, and Taganrog was the place chosen, where Alexander was to join her after his tour through the Crimea. On the eve of his departure his friend Golitzin pleaded with the Emperor to make some arrangement with regard to the succession in case of any eventuality, for up to that time nothing had been definitely settled : but the Emperor only looked pensive for a moment or two, and then replied : " Let us trust in God ; He knows everything infinitely better than we frail mortals."

Whether Alexander had ever any thought of carrying out his frequently expressed intention of abdicating and retiring into the quiet of private life will never be known ; but if this were so, he evidently anticipated having sufficient time in the meanwhile to introduce the various reforms about which he spoke to his friends. Karamsin remarked to him, apropos of the future : " There is yet much for you to do so that the end of your reign may be worthy of its beautiful beginning."

But the unexpected happened. Soon after joining his wife the Emperor succumbed to a malignant fever, although attended to the last with the utmost love and care by his physicians, amongst whom was his faithful friend Sir James Wylie.

Thus died, in his forty-eighth year, a monarch who had begun his reign under the shadow of a crime, and whose advent to the throne had been hailed with such joy by the nation ; but their hope in him had been doomed to disappointment. Yet Alexander was so full of good intentions that it was only his vacillating nature which had stood between

him and their fulfilment. Always, when he ought to have persisted, he drew back as though afraid of the logical consequences of the reforms which he had himself proposed. Even his ardent admirers must admit that in this otherwise delightful personality the elements of strength and stability were lacking, with the result that a life so full of promise ended in suspicion, disappointment, and gloom.

CHAPTER XVI

THE INTERREGNUM AND THE DECEMBRIST CONSPIRACY

(NOVEMBER 24 TO DECEMBER 14, 1825)

ALEXANDER had died without leaving either a personal or a political will. When the news of his death reached St Petersburg, the Grand Duke Nicholas immediately gave orders for the oath of allegiance to be taken to his elder brother, the Grand Duke Constantine, then at his residence in Warsaw. General Miloradovitch and Prince Golitzin, who knew that other arrangements had been made privily for the succession, pleaded for a delay; but Nicholas declared that anyone who would not do what he wished and at once take the oath of allegiance to his brother Constantine would be considered by him as an enemy of himself and of the Fatherland. Consequently everyone felt himself compelled to obey and to follow the example of Nicholas, who himself at once swore fealty to his brother.

The news of Alexander's death had arrived at Warsaw two days earlier than at St Petersburg, whereupon the Grand Duke Constantine announced to his entourage that, in consequence of a secret arrangement between himself and his Imperial brother, he had renounced his claim to the throne some years previously, and therefore that now Nicholas and not he was Emperor. He refused to be addressed as "Your Majesty," and himself took the oath of allegiance to his younger brother. When, therefore, the messenger arrived with a letter from Nicholas addressed to the "Emperor" Constantine, the latter refused to open it on the ground that it was not he, but Nicholas, who was the rightful bearer of this title.

Rumours of the abdication of Constantine were meanwhile spreading in the capital, and a state of oppressive uncertainty was making itself generally felt. How could such a situation have possibly arisen ? Was there no one who knew definitely what Alexander had arranged with regard to the succession ?

The members of the Imperial Council were aware of the fact that, in the year 1823, the Emperor had deposited in its archives a sealed document on which he had written : " To be kept until I ask for it ; but in case of my death to be opened first thing before any action is taken." One copy of this sealed document had also been entrusted to the Holy Synod, and another had been deposited in the Uspenski Cathedral of Moscow.

It is difficult to say why Alexander had not made public the abdication of Constantine in favour of his brother, who had preferred the love of a good and charming Polish lady, whom he had married morganatically, to the crown of Russia. In 1823 the Emperor had accepted his abdication and it was then that Alexander wrote the above-mentioned document, the contents of which were only known to three others—Miloradovitch, Golitzin, and the Metropolitan of Moscow.

Although Alexander had once mentioned to his brother Nicholas in a general conversation the possibility of his succeeding him, he was expressing the desirability of his own withdrawal into private life, as it might be good for the nation if the great task of ruling the Empire were shifted on to younger and more capable shoulders. The Grand Duke Nicholas had, however, never been told of the actual state of affairs in regard to his brother Constantine.

It should have been the duty of the Senate to hand the sealed document at once to Nicholas, who, on his part, should have accepted the word of his brother's advisers when informed by them of the existence of a document concerning the succession.

In consequence of all this confusion, there was an interregnum of three weeks during which time the two Imperial brothers exchanged many letters, both persisting in the position they had taken up ; until, finally, on 13th December, Nicholas gave in, and the troops which, three weeks earlier,

had sworn allegiance to the Emperor Constantine, were told to take a fresh oath to Nicholas on the following day.

It was this state of uncertainty, and also the knowledge that they had been betrayed, which decided the leaders of the military conspiracy to bring matters to a crisis and to make use of the taking of the second oath in order to bring about the fulfilment of their plans for the introduction of a constitutional Government.

Prince Troubetzkoi had been appointed leader ; the soldiers of certain Guards regiments had been prepared to take part in the revolution ; the outbreak was to be signalled by the refusal of officers and men to swear the oath of allegiance to Nicholas, on the plea that Constantine was their lawful Emperor.

On 14th December, the day appointed for the solemn ceremony, the mutiny broke out as arranged, and when the Emperor came out to reason with the disaffected troops which had assembled in the Senate Square two to three thousand men stood out against him.

TSAR, HOLDING IN HIS HAND THE FOUR SCEPTRES REPRESENTING THE FOUR TSARDOMS OF WHICH MUSCOVY CONSISTED AFTER THE CONQUEST OF SIBERIA, KAZAN, AND ASTRAKHAN.

(From Herberstein's *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, 1549.)

The Emperor, when informed of the Guards' refusal to acknowledge him as sovereign, personally addressed certain troops to try and influence them by alternate means of kindness and severity. He endeavoured to disperse the crowd so that his troops might have space and freedom of movement ; but the soldiers only responded by calling out his brother's name.

If there had been any organised and concerted action under good leadership, the conspirators might possibly have been successful, for society in general was on their side.

Many regiments were wavering, and the crowd would undoubtedly have backed them up; but Prince Troubetzkoi failed them, and at the critical moment could not be found. Ryleyev, one of the principal movers of the conspiracy, but a civilian, could not be expected to take command of the situation, and Prince Obolenski, who had to step into the gap, lacked the exceptional gifts required for such an undertaking. The mutinous soldiers formed a solid square and boldly repulsed every attack made on them by the loyal troops. The famous soldier, General Miloradovitch, the idol of the army, tried in vain to induce the mutineers to follow him back to the barracks.

Realising the danger to which the old man was exposed, the leader of the mutineers, Prince Obolenski himself, seized the horse's bridle and was on the point of leading Miloradovitch out of the Square, when the hero of fifty-six battles was mortally wounded by a bullet. The same fate befell Colonel Stürter, who was doing his utmost to bring the company of Grenadiers to their senses.

Another overture for surrender was made by the Metropolitan of St Petersburg, accompanied by the Metropolitan of Kiev and other high ecclesiastics. With cross uplifted high, he pleaded with the men and, in the name of the Emperor, he promised them, as the Grand Duke Mikhail and Miloradovitch had done before him, unconditional pardon to all but the ringleaders. But he pleaded in vain: the disaffected soldiers urged him to go home and to pray for them, but told him that he was interfering in business which did not concern him.

The early nightfall of a December day was fast approaching: there was the danger that the crowd which had been dispersed by violence might return under cover of darkness and side with the disloyal soldiers. The Emperor's advisers therefore urged him to act quickly and drastically. Count Toll is reported to have pointed out to him that he had no other choice than to give the order to clear the Square with shots from cannon, or to resign from his position on the throne.

As every attempt to bring the men to reason had failed,

Nicholas now gave the order to fire—at first only blank shot. But the thunder of the guns was only greeted with the answering thunder of the hurrah of the mutineers. Then the Emperor himself gave the order to fire on the closed ranks of the soldiers; and when at last these men turned round and fled, they were met by the fire of other cannon. This indiscriminate shooting caused the death of many innocent men, onlookers included.

The conspirators, to the number of two hundred and forty, were taken prisoners, and a severe investigation followed, in which the Emperor himself took part. He had personal speech with every officer, and what he heard from them opened his eyes to the existence of many abuses, which he decided to abolish. The flower of the Russian army was thus brought up for judgment. Seven months later the investigations were concluded and condemnation on one hundred and twenty-one men pronounced by the chief criminal tribunal, consisting of Metropolitans, bishops, senators, and generals; some of the latter having to condemn their own subordinates, in many cases the best men of their regiment.

The accused, many of whom were members of the highest aristocracy—princes, counts, barons, generals, colonels, etc.—had been divided into twelve categories. The first consisted of the five leaders, who were all condemned to be quartered. The Emperor, however, changed the sentence to one quite as degrading in the estimation of military men—that of death by hanging. Thirty-one were condemned to be beheaded, but by the Emperor's orders were sentenced to perpetual banishment with hard labour in the mines. Next came seventeen officers, whose punishment of having to put their heads on the block as a sign of civil death, and to work in the mines for the rest of their lives, was commuted to a term of twenty years in the mines. The punishment of those belonging to the other categories ranged from banishment, imprisonment, loss of nobility, loss of rank with and without the prospect of regaining it, down to being transferred to Siberian and Caucasian regiments; this, as a matter of fact, amounted to banishment.

The five men condemned to death were typical both of

the time and of the movement: Colonel Pestel, who was unanimously considered to be a man of iron character and great mental attainments, and of unswerving faithfulness to his convictions; Ryleyev, the soul of the Union in St Petersburg—a noble, pure-minded enthusiast who in his spare time acted as the legal adviser of the poor who were in distress; Colonel S. Mouraviev-Apostol, whose aim it had been to further the material welfare of the people, and who had studied abroad to fit himself for the task, and whose noble aspirations and pure unwavering faith so impressed the priest Myslovski that he said that his visits to this man in his cell filled him with awe and reverence. The fourth and fifth condemned were Lieutenant Kachovski and Sub-Lieutenant Bestoujev-Ryumin, a mere youth of twenty-two, but whose last talk with his comrade Mouraviev was on the immortality of the soul. He found it hard to die so young, yet in a courageous reply to the Emperor summarised the whole object of the conspiracy. Nicholas had addressed to him these kindly words: "You know that I can pardon you, and if I were sure that in future you would be a faithful servant I would willingly do so." To this Bestoujev gave the memorable answer: "Your Majesty, that's exactly where the mischief lies—that you are above the law; and it has been our aim and object to obtain for your subjects that in future their fate may depend upon the law, and not upon your momentary whim or impulse!"

On the way to the gallows the five condemned men were led to the church of the fortress, where they were compelled to listen to their own funeral service. As they walked on, quietly, unflinchingly, the only one to speak was Mouraviev-Apostol, who addressed some words of comfort to the youngest of the five; then, turning to the priest who was accompanying them, he expressed regret that he should have been obliged to go with them—as though they had been malefactors; to which the kindly priest replied in the comforting words of our Lord to the dying thief.

The hanging was so clumsily managed that the ropes broke and three of the condemned fell to the ground: then followed a few moments of appalling anguish during which

the ropes and nooses were rearranged. In the meanwhile the poor, tortured men blessed their Fatherland once again, and prayed for a brighter future for their brethren. But one of the condemned remarked with grim irony that nothing was well done in Russia, not even hanging !

The corpses were left hanging in the full view of the public for the whole day. At night they were taken down and buried on an island where, to this day, the running water and the rustling reeds whisper of the tragic end of these noble lives so rich in ideals, so full of promise—the forerunners of thousands which later on were to be laid down in the hope of obtaining a constitutional Government for the country.

Even Karamsin, who could not be accused of liberal tendencies, had pleaded with the Emperor to bear in mind the fact that " he was not dealing with personal and individual error but with that of the whole generation." The representatives of Great Britain and France had also pleaded with the Tsar, in the name of their respective Governments, that he would deal mercifully with the offenders. To Wellington he remarked, " I will surprise the world with my clemency ! " —and yet thousands were banished to Siberia.

The wives of most of the officers followed their husbands into exile, preferring a share in their hardships to separation. But this was very displeasing to the Emperor, who did his best to prevent it, causing all the children born to them in Siberia to be declared illegitimate : ten years later, however, this order was revoked.

In the brave endurance of their exile these men were supported by the conviction that they were martyrs to a political ideal. Mouraviev-Apostol wrote in his Bible, after having heard that he had been sentenced to death : " It is in the intention alone that guilt lies." He was conscious that the intention of himself and his comrades had been purely that of helping their country. They had erred as to the means employed, and paid for this with their lives.

A few weeks later the Emperor travelled to Moscow for his coronation, where, to his great joy and surprise, he was met by the Grand Duke Constantine who had come to do homage to his brother as his liege lord, and to prove to the

nation the sincerity of his desire to see his younger brother on the throne.

It was an incident unique in history, this meeting between brothers who had, each in his turn, refused to wear the crown in order that the other might have it. The people greeted the Imperial brothers enthusiastically, Constantine's presence at the coronation giving them the assurance that it really was his will that Nicholas should reign instead of himself; and wherever he went the loyal crowd greeted him with the cry: "Hurrah for Constantine!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE RULE OF NICHOLAS I.

(1825–1855)

The events of 14th December 1825 put back the clock for Russia. The experiences of that day left their indelible mark not only on the character but also on the reign of Nicholas I.; they confirmed him in certain views he had always held, and strongly influenced the direction of his policy, both domestic and foreign. On that day he seems to have dedicated himself to the work of "stamping out revolutions," both at home and abroad. In a letter to his brother he remarked: "Revolution stands at the gates of Russia, but it will never penetrate into her so long as I live."

It was a terrible experience for the new Emperor to find his authority thus threatened and attacked, and even his life endangered, on the very day of his coming into power. To the Grand Duke Constantine he wrote: "Your wish has been fulfilled. . . . I am Emperor, but, good God, at what a cost! At the cost of the blood of my subjects!" He thought of the brave old General Miloradovitch and of the other officers who had been wounded for his sake in their vain attempt to turn the soldiers back into the paths of obedience.

He was truly grateful for the protection which had been afforded him when he found out that an attempt was to have been made on his life; in fact, the officer who was to have done the deed, himself confessed this to the Emperor, but at the same time told him that, although he had stood opposite to him for two hours with the revolver cocked, he had not been able to pull the trigger. Still, the intention had been there!

From this time forth the inherent severity of the Emperor's nature became his dominant characteristic. He came to the conclusion that Russia required to be ruled with a firm and strong hand—that a clear, decisive will and an unswerving policy were needed : and he felt himself equal to the wielding of such power. Referring to this opinion of his, he remarked : " I shall be surprised if any of my subjects dare to act counter to my will, once that will has been made known." The Marquis de Custine, who knew him well, said of him : " He desires to be obeyed where others desire to be loved." He also described him in the following words : " I have remarked with involuntary pity that he cannot smile at the same time with the eyes and the mouth—a want of harmony which denotes constant restraint. He is less gracious, less pleasing, than his brother Alexander, but more sincere ; but he has an habitual expression of severity which sometimes gives the idea of harshness and inflexibility. . . The judicious economy of the exercise of power is a secret of which the Emperor Nicholas is ignorant. . . ." This iron will, this demand for obedience, had been fostered by Nicholas's early training. He expressed the hope that his critics and judges would always bear in mind the fact that he had not been educated to fill the post of Emperor, but merely to be a soldier, and that by his brother's sudden and unexpected death he had been placed, without any warning or preparation, in the position of ruler of the vast Russian Empire. Nicholas was primarily a soldier, whose conception of life, according to his own declaration, was that of service. He expressed himself as content and happy in the army and at ease amongst soldiers, because in military service order, legality, and discipline were the rule ; it allowed of no " knowing better " or contradicting, and everything fitted into its proper niche. He honoured the military profession because in it everything is service—" even the highest in command serves."

The successor of Alexander I. was a born ruler, clever, firm, unbending, who held his nation in an iron grip ; and for a man of such a temperament to be balked on the very day of his official accession to the throne was fatal to the liberty of the people. Yet Nicholas loved Russia, and in

his manifesto solemnly declared that " it is our earnest desire to live solely for the welfare of our beloved Fatherland . . . that our hope is to obtain the blessing of God and the love of our people. . . ." His desire to uphold and increase the greatness of his country degenerated into an attitude of aloofness, and even to pronounced antagonism, to all things foreign. It was he who believed that, as Western influence was democratic and dangerous, such influence should not only be staved off by every means, but also eradicated where it had taken root.

The spring of Russia's spiritual regeneration was interrupted by a long spell of frost, which held all life in abeyance during the thirty years of this reign. It was a strange aberration for so clever a man, to have imagined that repressive measures alone could benefit a nation.

The investigation into the cause of the Decembrist Conspiracy, the declarations of the accused, and the many documents confiscated in the domiciliary raids of those implicated acted as an eye-opener to the Emperor in regard to the condition of his realm and the causes which had led to the conspiracy. He personally interrogated each of the accused, and thus gained an insight into the motives which had inspired the conspirators ; and this motive he found to have been, in every case, patriotism—misguided perhaps, but nevertheless patriotism, and therefore worthy of consideration. That this was so the Emperor had to acknowledge, and he therefore commanded that a memorandum should be drawn up for his guidance out of the material collected during the investigation. Of this memorandum, which always lay on his writing-table, he sent copies to his brother the Grand Duke Constantine, and to the President of the Imperial Council, Count Kotchoubey. It was a faithful summary of the abuses prevalent in the Empire and of the suggestions for reform made by " his friends of the fourteenth," as Nicholas called the Decembrists, whom he had, nevertheless, felt justified in punishing severely.

For the moment it almost seemed as if all their thought and work had not been in vain ; for it had brought Nicholas I. face to face with the fact that his adored brother had left his

country in a deplorable condition. As long ago as 1815 the Grand Duchess Ekaterina Pavlovna had written to her brother with reference to existing conditions : " Vous savez comme les affaires de l'intérieur sont mal, et chaque jour on apprend de nouveaux détails ; de plus, nous avons une race de mécontents, détracteurs et raisonneurs qui ne fait que s'accroitre, et sans être injuste, on ne peut pas nier les motifs qui leur donnent prise, car ils existent."

Nicholas was anxious to change all this and to create order out of chaos. An eminent historian calls this famous memorandum " the unfulfilled programme of his reforms and the fulfilled programme of his errors."

The official entrusted with the drawing-up of this document began it with a few reflections and deductions of his own—to the effect that the liberal education given to young people, fostered as it had been by the Government and encouraged by society, had led them to favour " republican free-thought," which had been nourished by the evils which existed all around, and which, in their turn, had given a fresh impetus to and valid reasons for the desire to bring about a change.

Apart from the introduction, this document contained an unvarnished description of conditions as viewed by the conspirators, together with the reasons for the existing state of affairs, *i.e.* the lack of clear and definite laws ; the bad administration of the law ; unsatisfactory administration of the provinces, which had not undergone any reform since the time of Catherine ; and the loss of prestige of the Senate, whose ukases were frequently, and with impunity, ignored by the governors. Another serious evil was the bad organisation of the various ministries and their lack of cohesion ; and, finally, the existence of the " Committee of Ministers " —a body which seemed to expend its energy in the covering-up of evils and abuses in the various departments, and which threw the responsibility of everything upon the shoulders of the Emperor.

The responsibility of the ministers, instead of being individual, had become collective, and thus they were all better able to screen their actions behind the " will " of the Emperor.

This arrangement of affairs made it necessary for the Emperor to look through an immense mass of detail in which mistakes were easily lost sight of, and it is not surprising that he occasionally gave his consent to conflicting measures.

In fact, chaos was reigning, and the civil administration of the Empire was thoroughly rotten. The Emperor fully realised this, and expressed his sorrow and displeasure that it should be so ; but he considered it a hopeless task to try for any remedy.

The memorandum also pointed out the abuses resulting from the insufficient salaries of officials, and from the arbitrary system of taxation, and the fact that the State monopolies of alcohol and salt formed an unsound basis for the finance. It showed that there was no real order in the management of the State.

The military colonies were clearly shown to have resulted in a fiasco ; and as to the navy, it was proved to be practically non-existent, for the new ships built annually were never used but were simply left to rot.

Again, the condition of the various classes of society was analysed : that of the serfs, for instance, who suffered so cruelly owing to the excessive labour extracted from them ; of the peasants belonging to the Crown lands, who were cared for by no one, and only exploited by the officials ; and the abject poverty of the village clergy, who had no fixed salary and thus were dependent on the goodwill of the peasants.

The lack of a middle class, as it exists in other States, was also touched on, as well as the unsatisfactory condition of the commercial classes, especially those of Moscow, who had practically been ruined by the war of 1812.

This *résumé* of existing evils and their suggested remedies helped the Emperor to realise where his duty lay. He clearly perceived the necessity for codification of the existing laws and for the complete reorganisation of the fleet. These two points were successfully carried in the course of years. He also instituted a careful study of those projects of reform which had been left in abeyance during the reign of his brother.

What Speranski had been hindered from accomplishing

during Alexander's reign he was now enabled to carry out under Nicholas, who availed himself of this faithful man's services. This eminent legislator produced and published a *Complete Collection of Russian Laws*; thus, for the first time, every citizen could study for himself the laws of the land. Speranski pointed out to the Emperor how imperative it was to provide a number of efficient lawyers, and as a result of his suggestion many promising young students were sent abroad to study in Berlin under the great legal authority Savigny. The experiment proved a complete success.

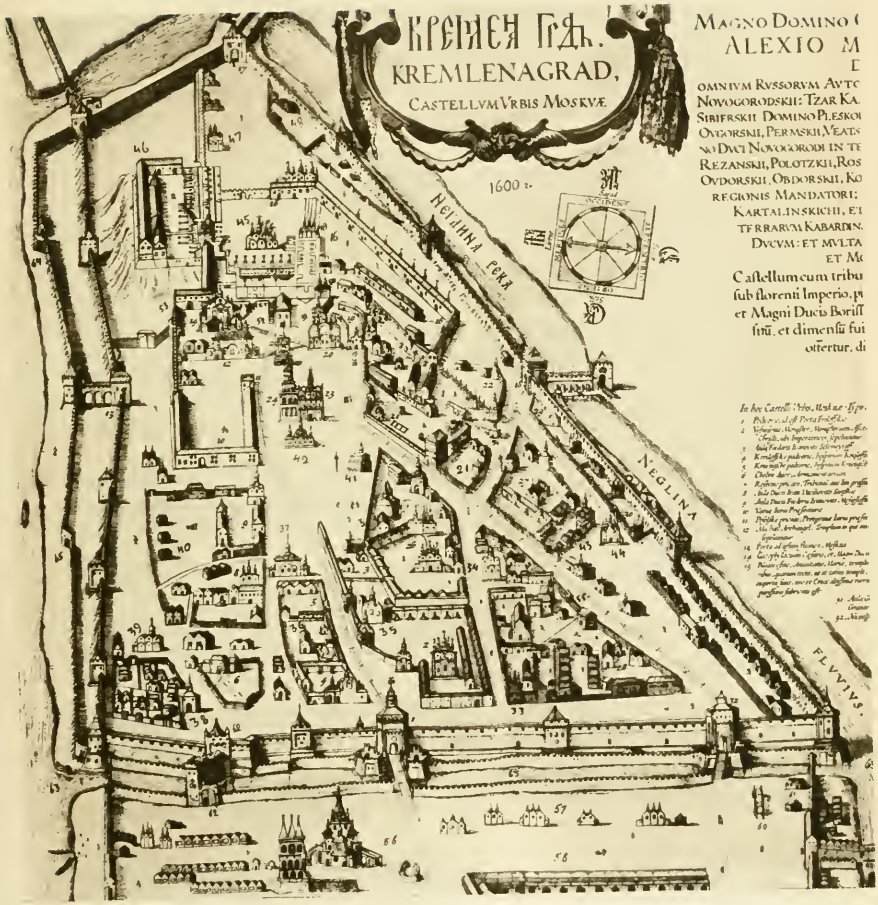
The case of the eighteen and a half million peasants living on Crown lands was also taken up, and a special official, Count Kisselev, was appointed to look after their well-being. This upright and honest man did a great deal in every way to ameliorate their lot—sanitation, schools, industry, all were looked after.

During the first two years of his reign the Emperor tried to abolish the most flagrant evils: his innate love of order made it impossible for him to rest until at least a semblance of order had been established. He made many mistakes, for his education had left him ignorant of legislation and of the science of state-craft, thus handicapping him severely.

The Emperor's mentality, accentuated by his military training, was destined to play an important part in the governing of the nation. The dual attitude of conservatism and reaction which characterised his reign throughout was the mixed result of his natural inclination toward order and love of detail, of his worship of uniformity and discipline as well as of the desire to carry out the policy of his late brother, as expressed in the Holy Alliance; also his innate opposition to all liberal tendencies, and fear lest those which had already taken root in the nation might produce undesirable fruit.

The actions of Nicholas were therefore what might be expected, but his people suffered terribly under his iron rule; and the very stiffness and tightness of the uniform he wore were symbolical of his nature and ideals, and very soon after his accession to the throne he put all the officials of his Empire into uniform.

This rigorous severity made itself particularly felt in the



Plan of the Kremlin in the Reign of Boris Godounov, A.D. 1600.

spiritual and intellectual life of the nation. Nicholas had not shared the pietistic sympathies of his elder brother, nor had he the breadth and toleration, although, personally, he was an earnest believer who read his Bible daily ; but he hated bigotry and hypocrisy, and consequently the services of Araktcheyev and Magnitzi were speedily dispensed with. He upheld, however the intolerant attitude of the Metropolitan Photi with regard to the Russian Bible Society, which he closed in 1827 ; but, although the Emperor confiscated its property and prohibited the printing of new Bibles, he permitted the sale of those already in hand. He also confiscated the property of the Roman Catholic Church, which had been making many converts amongst the aristocracy ; and in consequence of the pressure brought to bear upon them, four and a half million Greek Catholics in Poland were forced to return to the bosom of the Greek Orthodox Church.

In the person of the chief Procurator, or lay head of the Holy Synod, General Protassov, whom Nicholas himself had placed in this position, the Emperor found a ready assistant in the carrying out of his intolerant measures. This military head of the highest ecclesiastical authority of the realm entered whole-heartedly into the spirit of his master, and orthodoxy was called in to the support of autocracy.

Up to this time the spirit of propaganda had been entirely absent from the State Church. Although schismatics and sectarians had never been quite free from persecution, and in fact had enjoyed respite from persecution only when the attitude of the reigning monarch happened to be a tolerant one, members of other creeds had never been interfered with. During the reign of Nicholas, however, a new spirit awoke : that of proselytising.

Hitherto the idea had been that, as it was only natural for people of Russian blood to be Greek Orthodox, so it was just as natural for the Germanic peoples to be Protestant and the Latin races to belong to the Church of Rome. Consequently, there had been no religious antagonism between the members of different creeds living side by side in the Empire. From the time when foreigners first began to settle in Russia they enjoyed liberty of worship, and this attitude

of toleration was expressed in the answer of Ivan the Terrible to the Jesuit Possevin, apropos of the Lutherans against whom he was intriguing : " In our realm live many members of other Churches, and we leave them to follow out their own doctrines : only, they must not attempt to spread them abroad amongst our people."

This same attitude was also exhibited by Peter the Great in the manifesto of 1720 in which he invited foreigners to his Empire. He based his toleration on the fact that it was not his wish to force any man's conscience : " for every Christian should look after his own salvation."

The only Church to make propaganda in Russia was that of Rome. For centuries past the Popes had aimed at winning the allegiance of the Tsars, and thereby the nation, and it was just because of these attempts at proselytising that the State had had occasion to interfere.

The Protestant population of the Baltic provinces and of Finland were left in full possession of their religious liberties and privileges, which had been guaranteed on oath to them by every Emperor since Peter the Great and Alexander respectively had joined these countries to the Empire. It was, therefore, a perfectly new departure for the Holy Synod to open up a proselytising campaign in Livonia. But the Greek Orthodox missionaries employed secular rather than spiritual means, holding out as a bait free grants of land and money, with the result that about one hundred thousand converts were made in the 'forties.[1] Instances of compulsion were not unknown : such as the case of a priest who anointed all the children in an infant school, who from henceforth were reckoned members of the Russian Church, which neither they nor their children after them could ever leave. Propaganda on the same lines was carried on in the Caucasus. This new departure was fraught with considerable danger to the peace of the Empire, as it only served to increase restlessness and dissatisfaction, already prevalent.

The Emperor's fear of Western influence led to the establishment, in 1826, of a rigorous censorship, which was exercised from seventeen different centres. This placed the

[1] See Chapter XXIV., " The Baltic Provinces."

intellectual life of the nation under a ban : all modern thought was to be excluded ; every manuscript, with the exception of works produced by the Academy of Science and official documents, had to pass through the hands of the censor—even music was not exempt. Lists of prohibited books were sent annually to all libraries and bookshops ; and woe to him who dared to ignore them ! As every newspaper had to be passed in manuscript by the censor as well as every book, and as a strict censorship was exercised at the frontier on imported literature, all intellectual matter had to pass through a process of filtration in order to clear it of the bacilli of progress, or of any thoughts contradictory to those officially sanctioned by Government.

This rigorous régime lasted till 1830, when Prince Lieven, a cultured, devout-minded man, became Minister of Education ; he moderated and limited the application of censorship to such matters as might prove politically dangerous. After only a few years he was succeeded by Count Ouvarov, who for nearly eighteen years regulated the intellectual life of the nation with an iron hand, and the men who came after him showed still greater zeal. The activity of the Ministers of Education resulted merely in handicapping education. Prince Mentchikov, in commenting on these conditions, characterised them in the following words : " Formerly education in Russia dragged itself along like a lame horse, but at least one with four legs ; now it has only three, and is obstinate (a pun on the minister's name) into the bargain."

The Emperor's partiality for uniform showed itself in the law which made the wearing of uniform compulsory for all teachers and pupils in national schools, colleges, universities, etc., the idea being that this uniformity in outward appearance would tend to hold individuality in check, and would encourage a spirit of discipline.

The Government schools, in which the Emperor took a great interest, became, under him, a recognised part of the official system, which resulted in the liberties hitherto enjoyed by the universities being curtailed, and even the study of philosophy prohibited. This dangerous subject could only be lectured on by clerical professors in the Ecclesiastical

Academy. The Curator of the University of Moscow, Count Strogonov, however, managed to secure a certain freedom from police interference, and consequently intellectual life was less hampered in the ancient capital.

In his anxiety to keep Russia quite free from the pernicious influence of the West, the Tsar made it no longer permissible for Russian students to study abroad ; an exception was made, however, for those chosen few who were sent to study law, as the country was in such need of lawyers that, until they could be trained at home, Western infection had to be risked. In these attempts at keeping off Western influence the Emperor was applauded and whole-heartedly supported by the members of the Panslavistic party. Nicholas I., by his anti-foreign attitude, and by his zeal for all things Russian, helped to create and strengthen the nationalistic idea.

This idea, which first saw the light during the latter part of Catherine's reign, and which had passed through various stages, was by this time fully matured. Russia was merely passing through the same process of national awakening as all the rest of Europe ; but in each country this movement manifested itself in a different form. In Russia it was accepted as a State doctrine, and thus came to be reckoned as an adjunct to Government and Church—to autocracy and orthodoxy.

The nationalist theory developed gradually, and many strange factors and influences helped to fashion and shape it.

The earliest beginnings of this movement may be traced back to the days when, owing to the reforms of Peter the Great, a cleavage was made between the upper and the lower classes—when European culture came to be the hall-mark of nobility. We know how bitterly one party, the " Old Russians," resented the Westernisation introduced by Peter, and how persistently he had to fight and struggle against this conservatism when endeavouring to establish his reforms ; and we know how tenaciously the " Old Believers " especially, whose adherents were to be found mostly among the lower classes, clung to the old ways.

During the reign of Peter's successors, nationalism *versus* European culture had been regarded as a matter of purely

theoretical interest. The extreme partisans on both sides were held up to ridicule by satirists, and several Russian authors of this period began to bemoan the loss of the patriarchal virtues and habits of former days; and they sighed for the "good old times," which, as a matter of fact, had been very far from good.

Catherine decided to make use of these journalists, and in order to strengthen her reactionary attitude she got them to satirise the new liberal ideas which she had abandoned as dangerous and wanted to make ridiculous in the eyes of society. A few publicists, Novikov among others, realised this manœuvre, and refused to be made tools of. To quote Professor Milyukov: "Then, for the first time, the boundary line was drawn between the defenders of the backward and of the forward movement in Russia. The Government was with the former: the Liberals were gathering around the banner of opposition. From that moment the 'nationalistic' theory received a governmental and reactionary meaning which it has preserved to the present time. . . ."

ONE OF THE STRELTZI.

(The professional armed men of Muscovy, a body disbanded by Peter the Great. From Herberstein's *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*, 1549.)

The Empress had some difficulty in finding a basis for her nationalistic theory; for the great idea at the moment was that of "humanity," of the unity of all mankind; while the nationalistic theory, on the other hand, required peculiarity and differentiation. Catherine tried to solve the difficulty in a simple but drastic manner. All that was bad in Russia, she contended, was of foreign origin; all that was good and lovable was of genuine Slav origin.

She found a supporter in the historian Bolteen, who, although starting from a different standpoint, arrived at the same conclusion. He proved that Russians were different from other people, and that this was due to "the outward conditions of historical growth, and also to the climate."

It was not, however, in the eighteenth century that a satisfactory nationalistic theory was formulated. The next stage was passed through in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when Russian thinkers, like those of the rest of Europe, were carried away by the wave of romanticism. According to the new creed, a nation was no longer considered a "sum of individual units, entirely equal to one another and bound together by a formal or tacit act of 'social compact,' but an organised whole, as a unit, acting on a kind of collective impulse." Philosophical reasoning led to the deduction that there was a law underlying the evolution of history, and, again to use Professor Milyukov's words: "Between a world of chance and a world of miracles romanticism interposed an intermediate notion, that of a world of natural law, performed by God and realised by man's conscious volition."

The nations were looked upon as tools in the hands of a great Master-builder, and to each tool was allotted its own particular share in the great building of human development. This idea was worked out in Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, and from it Russian philosophers and sociologists borrowed the conceptions which they applied to their own country.

The fact that it was the Napoleonic wars and the subsequent deliverance from the invader which awakened in the Russian people a national consciousness, led, in certain circles, to a revulsion against French ideas, customs, etc., hitherto so prevalent in Russian society; and with the swing of the pendulum all things Russian came to be lauded and admired. In the very heart of Russia, among the professors and students of the University of Moscow, Slavophilism was born; it began as a philosophy, not as a political movement.

The axiom that each nation had a definite place and

purpose in history had been accepted ; but what was to be Russia's contribution to the history of mankind ? Out of the crucible of thought in which German theories and Russian feelings had been amalgamated, the nationalistic idea was produced. By a process of spiritual chemistry Western civilisation was analysed, and was found to be wanting in harmony. There was too much striving, too much antagonism between reason and feeling, and at last these Russian thinkers came to the conclusion that " Russia, on the other hand, was always striving to unite and reconcile the conflicting elements of life."

Western thought had become rationalistic, even atheistic ; the element of religion, so essential to the full development of man, was ignored ; the Slavophiles argued that " Western religion has chosen the way of reason and logic and so she has run astray, becoming the victim of her own infatuation and lack of humility. The Eastern Church alone knows what is the right way for human progress and toward eternal salvation." The Muscovite philosophers arrived at the point that neither atheism nor revolution was possible " in the Eastern world, it being the world of traditional religion—the religion of love and humility." They dug deeply into history to try and find proofs that this " essence of Eastern civilisation, Christian self-absorption in love," could also be found in that of Russia ; and, by dint of a great deal of casuistry, they found it in the Slavonic conception of " the village commune "—" the communality of people in ' the land.' " But this same conception also served as the starting-point for quite another school of thought, which arrived at the conclusion that " it represented in germ the socialistic society."

By equally theoretical deductions the Slavophiles idealised the State, making use of the tradition that the first rulers had not assumed power but had been invited to take it.

Through a process of mental evolution, which was influenced first by philosophy, then by natural science, and then by sociology, the Slavophiles reached the point of drawing up a programme for Russia. Her mission to the world, both religious and historic, was first to free all the Slavs under

Turkish rule, and then to unite them in a confederation under the hegemony of Russia, but with Constantinople as their centre. Indeed, this was to a great extent the underlying motive of the Emperor Nicholas's policy with regard to the Near East.

But this theory was superseded by that of another Slavophile leader, who objected to all foreign contagion. His theory was that "Russian originality did not consist in a creation of the new, but in the preservation of the old, and he suggested that drastic measures should be taken 'to freeze out' every new force, every element of progress, which should bud under the surface of Russian Byzantinism. Only this heroic cure could prevent decay." This purely negative theory of nationalism was attacked by the philosopher Soloviev, who showed that Christianity and progress were not antagonistic, and that there was no reason whatever for nationalism to be reactionary.

The Slavophiles believed, as did the Emperor, in national uniformity—in one language, one faith—at all costs. It was this creed which led to the persecution of those subjects of the Tsar who spoke in other languages, held other doctrines, and used other forms of worship than those prescribed by the State Church. It also led to the putting down of political and social movements, and to the making of attempts to bring all the nations in the Empire down to one dead level.

Prince Ouvarov, Minister of Education, expressed these ideas in a report of 1883, in which, among other things, he says: "... In the midst of religious and civil institutions rapidly on the decline in Europe, keeping in view the universal spread of subversive ideas and attending to distressing events that were happening at every step, it was necessary to establish the Fatherland on these stable foundations on which the welfare, the strength, and the life of the nation are generally built; it was necessary to discover such principles as belonged exclusively to Russia and those principles which formed its peculiar characteristics; to gather in one the sacred remainder of its nationality, and there to anchor our hopes of salvation ... without love

for the belief of one's forefathers, the nation as well as the individual must perish." According to him, orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality were the foundations upon which the State rested. Everybody was considered dangerous who did not uphold this doctrine, which has been a source of endless contention, and even of serious conflict, between the Government and certain sections of society.

Contemporaneously with the nationalistic movement a radical one was developing. Its starting-point and its fundamental idea were the same : " the idea of the people, and of the people's glorious destiny in the future." The initiators were members of the same class of society, and living side by side with the nationalistic leaders ; cultured, refined men, holding the same philanthropic views and humanitarian ideals. To quote Alexander Herzen : " We and the Slavophiles represented a kind of two-faced Janus ; only, they looked backward and we forward. At heart we were one, and our hearts throbbed equally for our minor brother, the peasant, with whom our mother-country was pregnant. But what for them was a recollection of the past was taken by us to be a prophecy for the future." It was just this difference of view which finally led to an irreconcilable enmity. But meanwhile it was, as yet, early days, and the tendencies were not so defined.

The fact that such a conspiracy as that which had broken out on his accession to power should not have been found out by the police decided the Emperor to reorganise the police system and to create a political constabulary—the " Gendarmerie," whose duties included the prevention of abuses in the administration of the country. It was his intention that this new body should consist solely of honourable men who would command both fear and respect.

This new body of secret police came under the direction of the Imperial Chancellery, which consisted of sixteen divisions, of which this was the third. Count Benkendorf, who drew up its rules and regulations, was genuine in his desire to further and protect the welfare of the nation ; but, unfortunately, his well-meant plan degenerated into a system of espionage and of legalised arbitrariness. The " Third

Division," as this hated organisation was called, was subdivided into four classes : (1) the ordinary police ; (2) those who were to keep watch over sectarian schismatics, false coiners, and forgers, and who had all exiles in their charge ; (3) those who had to keep an eye on all foreigners ; and the fourth division had to deal with the reports which came in from all parts of the Empire in order that the Emperor might be kept *au courant* with everything that was going on. All these reports had to be headed : " To be given into the hands of the Emperor."

The activity of the secret police caused a feeling of insecurity among all classes of society, and the close supervision irritated the nation. The " Third Division " came to be abhorred as an instrument of tyranny, and the activities of this institution probably did more than anything else to create the impression that the Emperor was severe to the point of cruelty.

Nicholas's intention of preventing the influx of new ideas led him to make strict regulations with regard to foreign travel : he also forbade the nobility to employ foreign tutors and governesses, and made the passport system more rigorous than ever. By this means he tried to build up a wall behind which his nation was to work out its own destiny in self-sufficient isolation.

The Emperor's honest desire to advance the material welfare of his people showed itself in many ways. The problem of serfdom was ever present with him, and in order to study it carefully, he instituted a secret commission, of which Speranski was the soul. At seven different periods it met to deliberate on this burning question, but without coming to any definite conclusion as far as the people were concerned. A few measures for the amelioration of their lot were, however, introduced—such as, in 1842, the regulations for a serf buying freedom for himself ; and in 1847 serfs were given the right of buying up the estates of insolvent masters—in fact, of having the privilege of holding property of their own.

Although Nicholas never managed to find any satisfactory solution to the problem of serfdom, he was more

successful in his dealings with the middle class. He instituted the class of "honourable citizens," which was open to all the sons of artisans and tradespeople who could produce the diploma either of the Academy of Arts or of the University, or indeed of any establishments for higher education. He also founded two important colleges for the training of professors and teachers, in compensation for the embargo placed on foreign study. At the same time the Emperor fostered and encouraged national literature, and personally acted as censor to the poet Pushkin, whose genius shed such lustre over his reign. This poet's political sympathies and his friendship for some of the Decembrists had inspired him, when only twenty years of age, to write an "Ode to Liberty" and other shorter satirical poems of a revolutionary nature. For this he was exiled to Bessarabia, and later kept in banishment on his small estate in Central Russia; otherwise he would probably have been in St Petersburg at the outbreak of the conspiracy in 1825, and he too might have had to end his days in Siberia, as did many of his friends.

After the revolution in Paris and other capitals of Europe in 1848 the Emperor became more stringent than ever. He put obstacles in the way of a university career, and limited the number of students for each university to three hundred; and thus, out of fifty million inhabitants, only two thousand nine hundred could become students, and these had to spend their lives under the strictest police supervision, like the professors themselves.

But in spite of the fact that the iron rule of the Emperor was making itself felt in every sphere of political and administrative life, and although the censorship was doing its utmost to clip the wings of Pegasus, the intellectual life of the nation soared higher than ever before. Despite the darkness of this ice-bound political winter, to which the reign of Nicholas I. has been compared, wonderful flowers of literature found place to bloom.

This period produced the exquisite poetry of Pushkin and Lermontov, and that of a number of minor poets, such as Koltsov, and wonderful fables by Krylov; the graphic novels and comedies of Gogol, so full of humour; the

works of the greatest novelists Russia ever had, Tourgeniev and Leo Tolstoi; and those of other and lesser lights, Dostoyevski, Gontcharov, etc. In fact, poets and novelists abounded — many first-rate and others whose merits have been disputed, but all of them idealists, influenced by the conditions of their day, which they depicted with their ready pens.

These conditions—the lack of liberty, the sufferings of the serfs, the struggle between the old school of thought and the new—are all brought to light in the literature of this period; and in perusing it the development of the nation can be clearly traced.

The drama, too, was especially brilliantly represented by Ostrovski, who holds with regard to the Russian drama, the same position that Tourgeniev and Tolstoi occupy with regard to the Russian novel. The first Russian opera, entitled *A Life for the Tsar*, was written by Glinka. Periodicals and journals flourished, and some of the deepest thinkers occupied themselves with the study of philosophy and history; in fact, this period produced a number of first-rate historians, such as Ustrailov, Soloviev, Kostomarov, etc., etc., whose productions have become the standard works of Russian history. Publicists like Herzen, critics like Belinski, and a host of other eminent men, enriched this era with the fruit of their brains.

But it was only as long as these men—whether poets, dramatists, historians, publicists, or economists—confined themselves to a trend of thought which was purely national and in harmony with the tenets of the Slavophiles, that all went well with them.

Art, however, is free, and cannot be for ever held in bonds, nor can it follow an official programme; and no amount of censorship will ever eradicate progressive thought, though for a time it may prevent it from spreading. A great many of Russia's thinkers saw things as they were; for them the past had lost its glamour, and the present, with its chains and fetters, stood before them in all its sordid reality. And it was of this they spoke and wrote, in the hope of preparing the ground for liberty and emancipation, which they felt

must surely come. The Emperor, on the other hand, meant to put off that day as long as possible, and had come to realise that the old state of affairs, which he aimed at preserving, was more endangered by the spreading of ideas of social reform than by actual political agitation, which was ruthlessly put down wherever it appeared. There was, for instance, the case of Petrachevski, the leading spirit of certain associations the members of which were earnest, thoughtful young men, many of them possessed of first-class literary talent, and who had made a careful study of political science, hoping and planning for the future reorganisation of Russia. In 1848 the members of Petrachevski's circle were regarded as political offenders. An investigation was instituted by the Government, in the hope of weeding out those elements of thought and criticism which were so dangerous to the old régime. The result was that all these men were condemned to death, but after the sentence had been read to the accused it was commuted to one of exile, forced labour, etc. Severe judgment was meted out to the literary representatives of the new ideas ; many of them had to taste the loneliness of exile and the horrors of imprisonment. Some of the choicest poems and most powerful novels have been written by these very men.

Idealism, enthusiasm, glowing patriotism, and a love of philosophy were the principal characteristics of the thoughtful and productive minds of this period.

Perhaps what has been most adversely criticised in Alexander I. was his vacillation—the lack of stability which stamped its impress on his whole reign. This reproach, however, cannot be levelled against the Emperor Nicholas, who, never swerving to the right or left, carried out the policy of repression all through. Of him the nation knew at least what to expect, yet everyone felt that the severity of such a winter must one day be superseded by the genial warmth of the spring.

The manifestation of life cannot be held down for ever; it can be held in just as little as the mountain brook which lies hidden for a time beneath a thick crust of ice and a layer of snow. To the careless passer-by who does not stand still

to listen, the silence of death seems to reign ; but to him who has the ear to hear and who stops to listen will come the faint gurgle of unfrozen waters flowing far below the frozen surface. When spring sets in these wintry bonds will be burst through, and the very ice and snow, now melted, will help to swell the volume of water rushing down the mountain-side into the plain, fertilising the valleys by its overflow.

CHAPTER XVIII

CAMPAIGNS, REVOLUTIONS, AND WARS

(1825–1855)

The joy-bells for the Emperor's coronation at Moscow had hardly ceased ringing when the disturbing news reached the ancient capital that Persian troops had invaded Russian territory, but they were driven back by General Yermolov, the commander-in-chief of the Caucasian forces.

This raid inaugurated a series of campaigns on the Asiatic frontier, which eventually resulted in the spread of Russian influence far into Central Asia. During the next few years successful operations against the Persians were carried on, and in 1828 the Treaty of Turkmantchai was concluded, by which it was settled that the river Araxes should form the frontier between the two countries, that the provinces of Erivan and Nachitchevan should be incorporated into the Empire under the name of Armenia, and the whole Armenian Church placed under Russian protection. Also a heavy war indemnity was imposed and a favourable commercial treaty made.

A year later the Russian Ambassador in Teheran was murdered, and it was only the personal intervention of the Crown Prince of Persia, who travelled to St Petersburg to apologise for the outrage, which prevented a fresh outbreak of war ; from that time forward Russian influence became a permanent and important factor in Teheran.

Although the Emperor Nicholas was endeavouring mainly to carry on his late brother's policy, he struck out a line of his own with regard to Turkey. He was not satisfied with making mere diplomatic representations and protests against

the ill-treatment of the Balkan Christians, but decided to take advantage of his position as their recognised protector to demand from the Porte the strict enforcement of all the stipulations laid down in the Treaty of Bucharest. Supported by France and Great Britain, he also demanded the evacuation of the Danube principalities and the recognition of Serbian autonomy. A part of these demands was acceded to, and Turkey was given seven years in which to settle the Serbian question.

By the Treaty of Akkerman, signed in October 1826, the influence of Russia became predominant, and she was ready to enforce the conditions of the treaty at the point of the bayonet. Meanwhile the Emperor entered into an alliance with England and France, and a joint note was prepared by the allies to secure protection for the Greeks. In July 1827 the Treaty of London, "the corner-stone of Greek independence," was signed; it aimed at putting an end to the Greek war and thus to deliver Greece from Ottoman domination.

But the Sultan refused to give in to the demands of the allies, and Nicholas sent his ships to join the allied fleet in the Mediterranean.

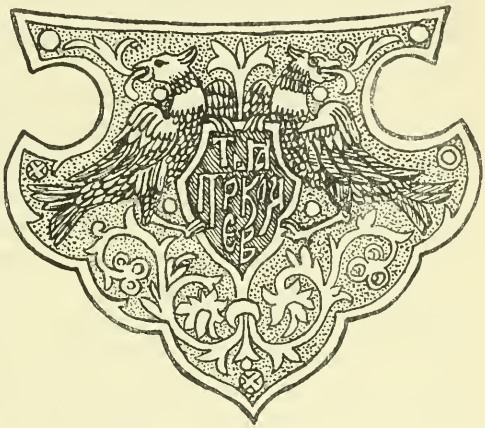
The Turkish fleet was destroyed by the united fleets at Navarino in 1828, and the ships which escaped were blown up by the Turks themselves. The news of this victory, which reached St Petersburg at the same time as that of the taking of Erivan, caused great rejoicing in the capital.

The Sultan, however, looked upon this violent demonstration, at a time when he was supposed to be at peace with the Powers, as a great insult. He demanded from the allies an apology within twenty-four hours; an indemnity for the loss of his ships; that they should desist from further interference in Greek affairs; and a definite declaration of their desire to live at peace with the Porte.

The ambassadors were in a most awkward position, as they could not get at their Governments; they tried to negotiate, but in vain. Turkey was reckoning on the assistance of Austria and trusting that England would withdraw from the alliance; the Sultan called upon all the faithful to fight

against the Christian foe and to avenge the Moslems killed ; the ambassadors had to leave Constantinople, and war became imminent. The Sultan considered Russia his most dangerous enemy, and accused her of having stirred up the Greeks and of having been the cause of every evil the Turks had suffered from during the last ten years.

Canning had been very anxious to prevent matters coming to a head between Turkey and Russia, as he did not wish the Emperor of Russia to act as plenipotentiary for the rest of Europe, but he died before anything was definitely decided upon. After his death England's policy became somewhat vacillating, and, in spite of Wellington's antagonism to Canning's Oriental policy, Turkey did not get the desired assistance. In regard to English policy, the wife of the Russian ambassador then in London wrote to her brother in March 1828 : "England . . . is afraid to go with us, afraid to go against us, and she thinks herself safe in holding midway between her two fears. This attitude is not very dignified for her, but it is not harmful to us, and that is the essential matter."



Design from a Goblet.
(16th century.)

Meanwhile, at the Russian Court military intrigues were complicating matters. Before going to war with Turkey, Nicholas considered it necessary to obtain a formal assurance from the other Powers that they at any rate considered him justified in declaring war. From France and Prussia he received most satisfactory replies to his letter : Austria tried to raise difficulties, and suggested that revolution might break out during the war, but finally promised to preserve strict neutrality. After standing out for some time, England at

last also admitted the fact that Russia's cause was a just one and that she had every reason to draw the sword upon her adversary.

It was of the utmost importance to Nicholas to know that no coalition would be formed against him, and with this assurance at his back he declared war on Turkey in April 1828. However, he could not do so in the name of the Alliance, as he would have liked, but only in his own. He publicly declared it his intention neither to take any European territory nor to destroy the Ottoman Empire, but merely to enforce the provisions of the Treaty of Akkerman which Turkey had failed to carry out.

One Russian army under Wittgenstein crossed the Pruth, while Paskevitch attacked Turkey-in-Asia. The Emperor joined his troops and assisted at the siege of Shumla, which, however, together with that of Silistria, had to be given up. The taking of Varna was the only considerable success of this campaign, the progress of which had been greatly hindered by sickness among the troops: these wintered in Jassy, as the plague was infecting Bucharest.

In Asia, on the other hand, Russian arms were successful, and the forts of Kars, Anapa, Poti, and others were taken, and later on also Erzerum, which completed the conquest of Armenia, assuring to Russia the commercial pre-eminence on the southern shores of the Black Sea.

But by having single-handed made a fairly good fight against Russia the *moral* of the Turkish army was raised and the prestige of the Ottoman Government increased in the eyes of the Western European Powers.

As the campaign of 1828 had no decisive results, the Emperor Nicholas hoped that the second campaign of 1829 would bring "cette guerre odieuse," as he called it, to a satisfactory conclusion. But to achieve this it was necessary to have the best possible leaders and to prepare a definite and carefully considered plan of operations. "For," wrote the Emperor, "I cannot permit the folly and mistakes of the last year to be repeated." Amongst the members of the commission of ministers and generals which had been called to prepare this plan, opinions differed even with regard to

the desirability of a campaign ; but all finally agreed that a lasting peace could never be secured unless it were signed " beyond the Balkans."

Meanwhile England and France had renewed their relations with Turkey. It was the policy of these two nations to exclude Russia from participating in the settling up of the Greek question ; Russian diplomacy, however, succeeded in keeping in with the Alliance in spite of Wellington's dislike to her doing so. Nesselrode was able to write to General Diebitch in April 1829 : " We have acquired complete security for the campaign which is now to open." It proved to be short, decisive, and successful for Russia ; the Bosphorus was blockaded and the Dardanelles shut off, thus threatening Constantinople with famine. General Diebitch destroyed the army under the Grand Vizier at the battle of Kouletchova, took Silistria, kept another army shut up in Shumla, and, after performing the hitherto unheard-of feat of crossing the Balkans, took Adrianople and threatened a descent on Constantinople.

This daring generalissimo was running tremendous risks, as he had only a comparatively small force with him, and was also cut off from his base. But fortune favoured him all along the line, and the march towards Constantinople caused such panic that the Sultan and his ministers sued for peace, which was at once accorded, for the Russian general, conscious of his perilous position, was equally desirous of a cessation of hostilities.

The Treaty of Adrianople was signed on 14th September 1829, and, as the Emperor had been waging war on behalf of the Greeks and not for the sake of gaining territory or for the aggrandisement of his Empire, he did not retain any of the strongholds taken in the Danube region, with the exception of the islands in the estuary of that river. The Porte had to recognise the independence of Greece, to open up the Dardanelles to all merchant vessels, and to pay a heavy indemnity. The Russian troops, moreover, were not to evacuate Moldavia and Wallachia until this indemnity had been paid.

The conclusion of the treaty was a great triumph for

Russia. Her power and influence had been strengthened in every way and her prestige increased; the Tsar seemed to hold Turkey in his hand; and a permanent pretext for future aggressiveness lay in the fact that, as recognised protector of the Balkan Christians, he had the right to interfere whenever he considered it necessary.

Ten months after the signing of peace between Russia and Turkey the July Revolution broke out in France, and Nicholas I. determined to take the side of Charles X. against Louis Philippe. He recalled all Russian subjects, and would have declared war had not political considerations forbidden it, and had not his brother and his Finance Minister pointed out to him in forcible terms that, after the expensive and sanguinary Turkish campaigns, a season of respite was absolutely necessary to his country. This revolution, however, was destined to leave a distinct influence on Poland.

After persistent and urgent representations had been made to him by the Grand Duke Constantine, Nicholas had consented to visit the kingdom of Poland in 1829 in order to be crowned there in the traditional way; but his brother had great difficulty in persuading him to hear the Te Deum sung in the Roman Catholic Cathedral, and thus permit the participation of the Roman Catholic clergy in the coronation ceremony. His brother, who was anxious to keep down the rising storm which he knew was brewing, reminded Nicholas that he could gain the hearts of his subjects only by showing toleration towards their religion: "Laissez les croyances aux hommes, ils ne vous en seront pas moins fidèles et reconnaissants."

The coronation took place in the Hall of the Senate, and the Emperor swore to uphold the constitution granted by Alexander I. in 1818. Nicholas was at this time in the flower of his manhood—tall, handsome, every inch a king. He tried by amiability of manner to conciliate the people, and many began to hope that constitutional rule, hitherto so sorely hampered, would now have a fair chance. But, unfortunately, the Emperor made grave mistakes showing a want of political tact, such as appointing eleven new senators, an act which, according to the constitution, was the preroga-

tive of the Diet ; with the result that, on the whole, he was met with reserve and coldness. The Grand Duke Constantine, who knew the Poles well, realised the seriousness of the situation and feared complications.

In conformity with his promise the Emperor called the Diet, which had not met for five years, and which he was to open in person in May 1830. Nicholas, to whom constitutional government was anathema, wrote to the King of Prussia to this effect, and also how trying it would be to him to find himself in such a gathering. In preparation for the event he studied all the speeches of Alexander on the subject, and remarked with reference to that made at the opening of the first Diet in 1818 : "This one is one of the chief causes of the events of December 14th."

The ideas of the Tsar and the Poles as to what would further "the true happiness of Poland" differed considerably, and the Diet did not work on the lines laid out by Nicholas. A strong opposition party developed, which increased in vigour, especially after the request for a reunion of Lithuania with Poland had been refused, owing to the fact that the interests of the Autocrat of All the Russias clashed with those of the King of Poland. The Diet was closed after much futile discussion, having accomplished nothing, and all this hastened on the crisis.

In November 1830 a conspiracy broke out in the military college : the cadets marched to the palace of the Grand Duke, where they were joined by the troops on duty when given the password, "The hour is come." Constantine fled with all his Russian soldiers and a few Polish troops which had remained loyal to him. He retired to a place near Warsaw, while the conspirators took possession of the arsenal and distributed arms to the citizens.

The Grand Duke took things very quietly, as he did not wish to interfere with what he called "a Polish quarrel."

A Provisional Government was set up in Warsaw in which the Princes Czartoryski, Radziwill, and others held office. A deputation waited on the Grand Duke, who promised to plead their cause to the Emperor ; for himself, he generously permitted any of his Polish soldiers, who desired to do so, to

join their comrades in Warsaw—an offer they accepted to a man. He then withdrew with his few Russian soldiers from Poland, where his rule had ended in fiasco. He felt the situation most bitterly, and wrote to his brother : " J'ai le cœur navré : à cinquante et un ans, et aprés trente-cinq ans de service, je ne croyais pas finir ma carrière d'une manière aussi déplorable."

The Emperor refused to hold any communication with the rebels : he had made up his mind to crush this rising with an iron hand. He wrote to his brother that if one of the two nations and one of the two thrones had to perish there could be no question as to which it should be. He felt himself justified in going to extremes—let them take the consequences ! And terrible indeed they were.

Meanwhile, in Poland itself things were going on in a very unsatisfactory way. One Provisionary Government after the other was overthrown, feeling ran high, and passions were let loose ; until, finally, on 22nd January 1831, the last chance of obtaining an understanding with the Emperor was irremediably cut off by the Diet formally deposing the House of Romanoff.

It was a foregone conclusion, when it came to the arbitrament of arms, which of the two would win in this uneven contest. The Polish army was well disciplined and in perfect condition, but too small and not well enough supplied with ammunition to be able to withstand for any length of time the superior forces of Russia. The Grand Duke Constantine could not help feeling a certain glow of satisfaction when witnessing the stand the Poles made at the battle of Grochov, as it was he who had organised the army during his term of office. General Diebitch, who was appointed Governor-General of Poland, guaranteed to put down the revolution in a very short time ; but out of consideration to the Grand Duke, who loved Poland, and would have keenly resented a bombardment of Warsaw, he did not act as vigorously as Nicholas would have liked, with the result that the rising spread all over the country. The Polish generalissimo, Chlopicki, a true patriot but an opponent of revolutionary measures, did all he could on his part to stave off this fratri-

cidal war, but it was all of no avail. The quelling of this Polish insurrection was dearly paid for on both sides: the valour and courage of the Polish troops at the battle of Ostrolenko made up for their lack of numbers; both sides were soon weakened, moreover, by the common foe, cholera, to which General Diebitch himself fell a victim. His successor, Paskevitch, the hero of Erivan, did not long have to consider the Grand Duke Constantine, who died shortly after the battle of Ostrolenko. Warsaw capitulated on condition that her troops should be permitted to withdraw from the capital. This was granted; but only a day later the army was forced to surrender. Poland was defeated. Paskevitch, as Governor-General, carried out his master's wishes with regard to the unhappy land, and meted out judgment with ruthless severity. Poland was deprived of her constitution, and the ancient arrangement of her provinces was modified, turning them into mere administrative districts placed now under Russian officials. The University of Vilna was closed and the Polish language forbidden to be taught in the schools. A standing Russian army was quartered on the land and the Polish army was disbanded. In future all recruits were to be drafted into Russian regiments scattered all over the Empire. The Governor-General was from henceforth invested with almost unlimited power.

To those who directly participated in the national rising severe punishments, such as imprisonment, exile, and confiscation of property, etc., were meted out. The revolution was so completely quelled, and the régime of the new Governor-General so rigorous, that for more than a quarter of a century a deathlike quiet reigned.

Although there was a temporary lull in hostilities on the south-western borders of the Empire, political negotiations, peaceful penetration, skirmishes, and campaigns were being carried on on the Asiatic frontiers, with the result that the Russian sphere of influence was steadily widening, especially in the direction of Central Asia and of China; and, in spite of protests on the part of Great Britain, the territory on the left bank of the Amur fell into Russian hands.

In Central Asia Russia increased in power and prestige,

and, after having opened up several trade routes and built forts, and after various more or less successful attempts to penetrate as far as Khiva, Russian suzerainty was finally recognised by the Khan.

In the Caucasus a campaign was carried on which lasted for twenty years. The annexation of Georgia in 1801 had not led to any definite settlement in those regions. Since 1817 General Yermolov, commander-in-chief in Georgia, had done his utmost to bring that centre of lawlessness into a state of order, safety, and prosperity ; he had built roads across Trans-Caucasia, and had fostered trade and commerce in every way. But it cost an endless flow of blood and money to subdue those hardy, warlike mountain tribes. Their leader at that time was that most brilliant and elusive of mountain chiefs, Shamyl, who was honoured and followed by the fanatical mountaineers, not only as their military but also as their spiritual head—to them he was a prophet.

After a tour in the Crimea the Emperor Nicholas visited the Caucasus, and at Tiflis he received the representatives of the various provinces which had been added to his dominions. He also visited Armenia and Erivan and saw for himself something of the extent to which Russia had grown in Asia. It is not to be wondered at that he felt proud and happy in the possession of such an Empire ; but he also realised the responsibility it entailed, and his own need for wisdom lest he should abuse the power it was his privilege to wield.

A loyal address, presented to the Emperor in 1830 by the citizens of Moscow on the occasion of an exhibition there, contains amongst other things the following graphic reference to the vastness of the Russian Empire : " Our Tsar . . . who with one hand shakes Teheran and Stamboul and with the other holds the fate of half a world. . . ." They also expressed their desire to co-operate with him, declaring that " while his warriors were thundering at the strongholds of Asia, and at Constantinople, he was spending sleepless nights thinking of them and labouring for their welfare ; they, on their part, were working in hut and factory for the general good. . . ." " We want to increase the wealth of our Fatherland . . . we want, not by force of arms but by the

effort of our brains, by labour and activity, to wrest from the foreigner our national treasures; so that the whole country may have the benefit of them. Thus would we help to strengthen our Russian lands. . . ."

As in 1826 Alexander I. had morally supported the Sultan against "revolutionary" Greece, so in 1833 Nicholas supported the Sultan against Mehemed Ali, Viceroy of Egypt, whose victories had alarmed the Porte, which now requested the good offices of her Russian neighbours. Russian warships accordingly proceeded to Constantinople and troops to Hunkiar Skilessi; but after peace had been concluded between the Sultan and the Viceroy, through the mediation of France, and the Russian troops still remained on, the Porte began to fear that the friend might be quite as dangerous as the foe. In consideration of services rendered, Count Orlov succeeded in concluding a defensive alliance for eight years with the Porte, in which it was agreed to close the Dardanelles to all foreign warships, the waters of the Black Sea thus becoming practically the monopoly of Russia. The protests of France were ignored, and Russian influence was consolidated in the Near East.

In 1836 the Russian troops withdrew from the Danube principalities, as Turkey had by that time paid up her war indemnity. Diplomatic conversations and negotiations were carried on during the next few years; the combination of alliances shifted, but by 1843 Russia's prestige had steadily increased and there were sufficient opportunities for Nicholas I. to interfere in the concerns of Europe.

The Emperor looked upon himself as the only sovereign who still carried out the principles laid down by the Holy Alliance; he considered himself, therefore, the instrument ordained by Providence to crush out all revolutionary movements. The July Revolution in Paris in 1830 was the signal for revolutionary outbreaks in various other capitals. Nicholas offered to send troops to assist the King of Prussia in abolishing the constitution, an institution he considered most undesirable in a neighbouring State. Just then Russia's neighbours along her western frontier were in a state of ferment—the Slavs in Austria, the Wallachians and Mol-

davians, the Hungarians and Roumanians, were all passing through a period of revolution.

In the case of the Hungarians, Nicholas actually sent troops in 1848 to assist the Austrian Emperor in bringing his rebellious subjects to order. General Paskevitch was soon after able to report to the Tsar : " Hungary lies at the feet of your Majesty." The Emperor was pleased with this, but not with the knowledge, which reached him about the same time, that his soldiers were openly sympathising with the Hungarian rebels.

In 1849 he interfered in the rising of Bothnia and Bulgaria, with less happy results, however, than had been the case when a few years previously he had sided with the Sultan against the Wallachians. The whole southern Slav world was on fire, and Nicholas, true to his convictions, felt himself compelled to quench the flames. He interfered or intervened on every side, conscious of his power and of his rôle as the upholder of order.

New causes for conflict with Turkey were constantly cropping up. In 1853 relations became strained over the question of the Holy Places, and Russia's objection to certain privileges which had been granted to France as the protector of the Latin Christians was to be made the pretext for hastening the demise of the " Sick Man," as Nicholas called Turkey. This, however, was by no means an easy matter in view of the growing opposition of the Western Powers to the increasing authority which Nicholas was exercising in Europe. According to the words of Prince Albert, " The Emperor Nicholas is the master of Europe, Austria a tool, Prussia a dupe, France nothing, and England less than nothing." A storm was gathering all over Europe against this self-constituted dictatorship by the Autocrat of All the Russias, and it needed little to bring matters to a crisis.

Prince Mentchikov was sent to Constantinople, ostensibly to settle the point raised with regard to the Holy Places, but secretly to arrange for an effective Russian protectorate over all the Orthodox Greeks in the Ottoman Empire, in return for an offensive and defensive alliance in the case of an attack by France. The ostensible cause for Mentchikov's journey was

settled satisfactorily in conjunction with the other Powers; the secret arrangement, however, leaked out, and Turkey, backed up by the ambassadors of the Great Powers, rejected Mentchikov's ultimatum on the plea that the acceptance of such demands as those made by Russia would compromise the "fundamental principles of independence and sovereignty."

Having failed in his mission, Mentchikov left Stamboul, but warned the Porte that this refusal to guarantee the privileges and rights of Orthodox Christians would compel the Russian Government to use other means to secure them. The Emperor Nicholas was for immediate action. He broke off negotiations, and issued a manifesto to his people in which he proclaimed the object of the new war to be the upholding of the integrity of the rights and privileges of the Church: it was to be a kind of crusade—the Cross against the Crescent.

In spite of much advice to the contrary, and of the express disapproval of all the Powers, Russian troops under Gortchakov entered and occupied the Danube principalities. Nicholas did not consider this a declaration of war, but only a means of bringing pressure to bear on Turkey.

The Tsar had reckoned on English neutrality, but he was mistaken, for England and France considered it time to intervene, and were taking steps to prepare for further eventualities. War, however, did not break out at once. Turkey was not ready for it, and the Tsar was disconcerted by the unexpected alliance of England with France. In England, also, opinions differed as to the advisability of going to war. Napoleon III. was satisfied with having isolated Russia, and, in view of the danger of combined action against him, Nicholas agreed to arbitration by the Powers. By the Protocol of Vienna matters seemed to be settled and war staved off for a time, though the vagueness of the Note was as satisfactory to Nicholas as it was objectionable to the Sultan.

But while these diplomatic pourparlers were being carried on, religious feeling was running high in Turkey, where the Emperor's manifesto to his people had produced an outburst of fanaticism among the Moslems, and, as Russia had

not yet evacuated Moldavia, the Sultan, if he wished to remain on the throne, seemed to have no other choice but to declare war.

English and French ships entered the Bosphorus, but after the Turkish fleet had been defeated at Sinope the allied fleet entered the Black Sea in order to prevent further aggressions by Russia. Napoleon III. made a final attempt to bring about an understanding, but failed. On 12th March 1854 England and France promised their help to the Sultan, and a few days later Austria and Prussia signed a convention to guarantee each other assistance in case of attack by Russia.

Thus Russia stood absolutely isolated, but the Emperor proudly declared in his manifesto that Russians of his day were of the same calibre as those of 1812.

Events followed each other in rapid succession, and on 27th March 1854 war was declared by France and England against Russia. His people were assured by the Emperor Nicholas that Russia was not fighting for any temporary gain, but for faith and Christianity, while the Western Powers had entered this contest merely with the aim of weakening the Russian Empire.

A proof of the Tsar's sincerity of motive in going to war is to be found in a private rescript intended for the guidance of Count Nesselrode : it is the Emperor's autograph summary of the causes which led to the war, and was composed after Lord Aberdeen's speech and the decision by England to take action against Russia on the sea. He speaks of Great Britain's unfriendly attitude, and then proceeds : ". . . déclarant dés à présent à toutes puissances que, reconnaissant l'inutilité des efforts communs pour amener le gouvernement turc à des sentiments de justice, et forcés à une guerre dont l'issue ne peut être définie, nous restons fidèles à notre principe déjà proclamé de renoncer, s'il est possible, à toute conquête, mais que nous reconnaissons que le moment est venu de retablir l'indépendance des états chrétiens en Europe tombés depuis des siècles sous le joug ottoman. . . . Qu'en prenant l'initiative de cette resolution sainte, nous appelons à toutes nations chrétiennes pour se

joindre à nous dans ce but sacré. . . ." He expressed his desire to bring about the full independence of all the Slavs of the Balkan states and of the region of the Danube, each of the nations to be governed by "un homme de son choix, élu par eux-mêmes et pris parmi leurs nations. . . ."

He honestly believed that this appeal would win response from all Christendom, and could not conceive the possibility of any Power joining with Turkey to fight against Christians; but his optimism was doomed to disappointment.

17th-Century Hatchet.

Thus began the Crimean War, the best-known incidents of which were the bombardment of Odessa and Sveaborg and the blockade of the Gulf of Finland, the battles of Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman, and the siege of Sevastopol. In addition to the horrors of sanguinary warfare and the terrible losses sustained in the sieges, much suffering was caused by the rigour of the winter and by the devastations of cholera; but while human lives were being laid down with the utmost bravery on both sides, diplomacy was beginning to do its part.

The Russian nation began to grow restless, the people were perplexed at the forces of their country being kept in check by foreign troops; and the terrific loss of life, the absence of victories, and the prolongation of the war all worked together to create a general feeling of desperation. Everyone turned against the Emperor, who suffered intensely but would not listen to peace proposals, as from his point of view it would have been treason to give up a cause which was as sacred to himself as to his people.

In spite of trouble and worry he worked as earnestly as ever, from early morning till late at night, at the business of the State. A serious chill, caught at a military review, brought on pneumonia, from which he never recovered. He

refused to take care of himself, and died as he had lived—a soldier at his post. In his last message to his people he once again solemnly declared that he had undertaken the war from unselfish motives, and purely with the purpose of effecting the deliverance of the Greek Orthodox Christians.

The earnest and lifelong desire of the Emperor with regard to his country found expression in a letter to his wife : " Que la Russie soit forte, heureuse et prospère "—that was all he cared for. It must therefore have been to him a sore grief to leave his beloved country far from strong, happy, or prosperous.

CHAPTER XIX

ALEXANDER II. AND RUSSIA ON THE EVE OF GREAT REFORMS

NICHOLAS I. left to his heir a legacy of sorrow. "I leave you much labour and worry . . . the burden will be heavy" were some of his last words to his son.

The new Emperor, however, was exceptionally well prepared to take upon his shoulders the arduous duties of sovereignty, and he met with nothing but trust and confidence when he came to the throne, for his nature and outlook on life were known to be both generous and liberal.

Everybody anticipated that the long political winter would at last be followed by spring; the earnest for this assurance lay in the character of Alexander II., and in the fact that he had been educated by the humane and noble-minded poet Joukovski.

The Emperor Nicholas had realised the severe handicap which a purely military education had been to him as sovereign; and therefore, in 1818, when his eldest son was born, although he had no anticipation of becoming Emperor himself, he decided to give his son the best possible education and to put him under the guidance of men of integrity and intellect. In these ideas he was at one with his charming and beautiful wife, with whom at that time he lived in perfect accord.

Thus, born of loving parents and reared in an atmosphere of harmony, it is not to be wondered at that the young Grand Duke had such a sunny and kindly nature, and was such excellent material for the honest and earnest man whom his parents had chosen as his tutor to work upon. Rarely has any prince had a better chance of reaching the ideal expressed by his future tutor in a poem written to celebrate his birth, namely, that of becoming a *man* on the throne.

On his appointment to the position of tutor to the Grand Duke, Joukovski paid a visit to the great pedagogue Pestalozzi, in order to fit himself yet more thoroughly for the responsible task entrusted to him. He also drew up a "plan of education" which he submitted to the august father of his pupil, and which was accepted almost in its entirety. Joukovski's idea for his pupil was not that he should become a great scholar, but that in the truest sense he should be educated and taught to know and realise his responsibilities. Knowledge was to be coupled with discipline. He aimed at impressing it upon his pupil's mind that there could be no real liberty without order and no true order without liberty. As a means to this end, a knowledge of history, viewed from the standpoint of religion, would, it was hoped, develop in the boy's heart a love for all that was great and true, and call forth respect for humanity, thus creating a desire to gain renown for noble deeds only.

Noble motives and high ideals were in this manner brought before Alexander, and the future ruler learned in early life to respect law and education, to love liberty, and to be true to his word. He was taught that a ruler's greatness did not consist in the strength of his army, but in the well-being of his subjects, who were his to love and honour, and over whom he was to rule not by arbitrary but by legal methods.

The Grand Duke's instructors were all chosen with a view to the carrying out of this "plan of education."

As Alexander grew older he had to spend a good deal of his time in military training, but this did not mean that the general course of instruction was neglected. For a year and a half Count Speranski lectured to him on legislation, a branch of learning in which the Emperor Nicholas felt himself especially deficient. This noble-minded legislator taught his pupil that a right is such only so long as it rests upon truth, but that as soon as untruth takes the place of truth it becomes arbitrary and loses its value. The history of Russia's foreign policy in the past was taught to Alexander by Baron Brunnow, who, a firm believer in the principles of the Holy Alliance, gave to the future monarch a strong bias in this direction. It

was the Finance Minister Cancrin who introduced the Grand Duke to the intricacies of finance.

Alexander was sent to travel both at home and abroad, and in the course of time he visited practically every part of his father's vast dominions. This gave him some idea of the difficulties he would have to encounter in ruling over an Empire made up of such a multiplicity of tribes and nations, with their different levels of culture and variety of customs.

On his visit to Siberia in 1837 he came into contact with several of the exiled Decembrists, on whose behalf he then pleaded with his father, and his intercession was not altogether in vain. Amongst others for whom he procured better conditions were Tourgeniev, whose term of imprisonment was shortened, and Alexander Herzen, who was permitted to exchange for Vladimir his place of exile in the distant province of Vyatka.

On his coming of age the Grand Duke was appointed Hetman of all the Cossacks, and two years later he was made Chancellor of the University of Helsingfors. Thus, in his youth, humanitarian, military, and intellectual interests were brought well within his range.

By his modest, genial, and kindly demeanour Alexander soon won the hearts of everybody, and in Finland especially his gracious manner did a great deal to break down the wall of distrust which had been growing up during the stern rule of his father.[1] In the year 1849 the Emperor made him chief over all the military schools, in which capacity he was brought once more into contact with the youth of the country.

The Tsarevitch had a great deal of insight, and soon perceived where abuses had crept into the administration of the country, and he took the most lively interest in all suggestions for reform. All his interests were shared by his charming wife, Maria Alexandrovna of Hesse-Darmstadt.

Though introduced to every sphere of government, he was not permitted to take any active part in politics. When, however, the Emperor Nicholas travelled abroad, he entrusted his son with the affairs of State, and in 1845 Alexander

[1] See Chapter XXVI., "Finland and her relation to the Tsars."

received the order of St Vladimir in recognition of his services in this respect. In the letter accompanying this order his father drew his attention to its motto, "Usefulness, honour, and glory," which he was to make his own in that station of life to which it had pleased God to call him.

When the heavy burden of rulership was laid upon the shoulders of Alexander II. it soon became apparent that he had been well prepared to carry it with honour. At the first meeting of the Imperial Council which he attended after his father's death he reminded its members that as occupiers of the highest position of trust in the Empire they should never forget that it was their duty to set the nation an example of "reasonableness, industry, and honesty."

Alexander's first actions as Emperor were in tune with his frankly admitted predilection for rewarding instead of punishing, for praising instead of reproaching. He granted an amnesty to the Polish refugees,[1] permitting them to return home, and even promising them re-entrance into State service after a period of three years. He also delivered the nation from the tyranny of the censors.

In every sphere of life and in every department of the State corruption was rife. The nation was suffering from many grievous ills, and hearts were heavy with sorrow. In a letter written in 1855, Aksakov says: "Ah! how hard is life in Russia in the present day! . . . What can one expect from a country which has produced, and which still endures, such conditions of public life; where one must lie in order to convey the truth; where one has to act illegally to act justly; and where it is obligatory to wade through the whole procedure of deceit and rascality to come out at last to legality? . . ."

But before these problems could be grappled with, the war had to be brought to an end; and although the Emperor was a man of peace, he could not consent to peace without honour. However, thirteen days after his accession the tentative pourparlers begun in the last reign culminated in a Conference in Vienna, to which Alexander, contrary to the wish of the Foreign Minister, Nesselrode, sent Prince

[1] See Chapter XXV., "Poland."

Gortchakov as Russia's plenipotentiary. The Conference, however, proved abortive, and the Emperor, who gave orders for a much more general mobilisation, personally visited the theatre of war in order to convince himself of how matters stood. It was evident that Russia required an increased army, for, apart from having to contend against the allied forces, her troops were trying in vain to subdue the intrepid Shamyl in the Caucasus.

The whole country was in a sore plight, and on 5th September 1855, in spite of the great bravery of the soldiers, Sevastopol fell after having withstood a siege of three hundred and forty-nine days.

Yet after the fall of Sevastopol the war still dragged on for another five months. Meanwhile diplomacy was doing its part to bring about a settlement of the war. The Russian success in taking Kars served as a salve to national soreness over the fall of Sevastopol. It also hurried on the peace, which was signed in February 1856. The conditions which Russia was forced to accept were both humiliating and galling. She lost her cherished right to the exclusive protectorate of the Greek Orthodox Christians, who were now to be under the united protection of the Concert of Europe, into which Turkey was admitted. Russia also lost her sovereignty over the Black Sea, which was declared neutral water. No naval bases were to be erected on its shores, nor was Russia to be permitted to build a navy on this sea. Both Turkey and she were limited to ten lightships. She had also to surrender the Danube estuary and some land on the Euxine, and the fortress of Kars.

It is small wonder that relations between Russia and Great Britain, Austria, and the Porte especially, remained strained. With France and Sardinia, however, they quickly became amicable ; but no alliance was concluded, for Alexander II., reared in the political traditions of the Holy Alliance, considered Napoleon III. a representative of that European radicalism which he had been taught to abhor. On the other hand, this political conviction drew him into a closer union with Prussia, whose ruler shared these views.

The whole nation hailed the proclamation of peace with

relief. The manifesto announcing this fact had a twofold effect: it not only delivered the nation from the actual misery of a state of war, but in its concluding words, heralding the new era, it held out the prospect of domestic welfare, of a reign of justice and mercy, of the development and furtherance of education, and of all other useful activities. It was also foreshadowed that in the law courts for the future the law would offer the same protection to all, and that before it all men would be equal. In the approaching period of peace the fruits of innocent labour were to be enjoyed.

The manifesto ended with these solemn words: "Finally, and this is our primary and most lively desire, that the light of a saving faith, enlightening the mind and rendering the heart firm, may guard and improve more and more public morality, which alone is the pledge for order and happiness." It was these words, intimating as they did the vital reforms needed by the country, which raised the hopes of the people. The nation was now on the eve of great reforms; time, however, proved that several years were to pass before these anticipations were fully realised.

The results of this humiliating and disastrous peace were destined temporarily to eliminate Russia from participation in international political activity. The commanding position she had occupied in the earlier years of Nicholas I.'s reign had been lost; but this compulsory inactivity the Emperor and his Chancellor purposed to put to the best possible use. Gortchakov's famous statement with regard to Russia's silence in the Concert of Europe tersely expressed the truth: "La Russie ne boude pas; elle se recueille." She was not sulking—far from it: she was in reality "collecting herself." She had come to her senses.

The evils which had become manifest demanded immediate attention, and of this the Emperor was fully convinced. He wrote under a ministerial report presented to him at the end of his first year's reign: "I have read this report with great interest and gratitude, especially with regard to the frank exposition of all those abuses; with the help of God and by general and united effort, I hope to see these righted with every year."

With the accession of Alexander II. the coldness of the long Arctic winter which had reigned for the last thirty years was dispelled, and the mild air of approaching spring began to make itself felt. The Crimean War was acting like the "Föhn" wind, which, howling and whistling, blows over the snow-clad heights, but brings spring to the valleys and uplands —the silence of winter is replaced by the sounds of life. So it was now with the Russian nation.

One of the first beneficent measures introduced by the Tsar was the abrogation of the strict censorship which, like a thick crust of ice, had kept imprisoned the expression of thought. Delivered from this restraint, pent-up feelings burst forth, bubbling over, and a discussion of foreign and domestic policy became possible—public opinion, fears and hopes could all now be expressed. The output of literature, especially of newspapers and periodicals, increased by leaps and bounds. Whereas, during the last decade, only six newspapers and nineteen periodicals—and these mostly devoted to special interests such as children, fashion, medical science, etc.— had been permitted to exist, the numbers grew to sixty-six newspapers and one hundred and fifty-six periodicals within the next few years. It was because the Emperor himself was so absolutely convinced of the necessity for reform, that a public expression of the same was something to which he could not, nor even wished to, object.

Emancipation was in the air—Russian society had begun to realise the horror and the evils, social as well as moral, inherent in any system of slavery. Literature had done a great share of the work of opening the eyes of the public : Gogol's *Dead Souls* and Tourgeniev's *A Sportsman's Notebook* had shown up life as it was in the provinces. The poet Nekràsov acquainted his readers, not only with the suffering, but also with the charm of the Russian peasant. Ostrovski, in his plays, brought before the footlights the habits and customs of the Muscovite merchant class, so ignorant and as yet so bound by Tatar traditions. Gontcharov, in his *Oblomov*, depicted the baneful effect of serfdom on the wealthier classes—the lack of energy, the good intentions dwindling away to nothing because of the enervating influences which

surrounded the serf-owners. These great writers were realists who, with powerful strokes, painted life as it was ; pitilessly they forced society to look at its own distorted face, and to see in its unwholesome countenance the signs of disorder which had attacked its very vitals.

The severity of the censorship and the iron rule of Nicholas I. had silenced all expression of political aspirations and ideals ; only under the lighter form of fiction these masters of literature had been able to publish not a few home-truths. But now publicists, journalists, all alike, were free to write on the burning questions of the day with a heart on fire with love for their country. *The History of the Peasants in Russia*, by the Slavophile Bylaev, articles in the Russian *Contemporary* and others, advocated in eloquent language the liberation of the serfs. In a foreign land the great genius of the exile Alexander Herzen was expending itself on behalf of freedom ; and his journal *The Bell*, published in London, was smuggled into Russia, where it had a large circle of readers, including even the Emperor himself.

For the voiceless millions of Russia who had been held down in the iron grip of class selfishness the hour of liberation was dawning. The birthright of man, liberty, could not be held back from the peasant for ever, and the fall of Sevastopol drew after it the fall of that apparently impregnable fortress —serfdom.

Leroy-Beaulieu contends that the foreign armies on Russian soil were unwittingly battering and ramming against the stronghold of Russia's enslavement ; that, unknown to themselves, they were actually working for the liberation of the peasant. He considers Russia all the better for her defeat : " Jamais un pays n'a, peut-être, acheté aussi bon marché sa regénération nationale. D'une guerre dont l'issue ne couta que des sacrifices de son amour-propre, d'une paix dont les clauses humiliantes ont été profondément effacées, il ne lui reste qu'une durable transformation intérieure."

The Emperor and his new political adviser, Gortchakov, who had succeeded Nesselrode, realised the necessity for this domestic regeneration, and that the very fact of Russia being put *hors de combat* politically might—nay, should—be a means

View of the Kremlin.

From a Water-colour Drawing A.D. 1786.

of blessing to the nation, which was bleeding from many wounds. To heal these was the care of Alexander II. The difficulty, however, was to know how to set about the work, and whom to entrust with the task of drawing up the necessary schemes required for the reorganisation of the various departments of governmental and national life.

It was especially with regard to this matter that the Emperor found himself in rather an awkward position, as practically all the ministers were conscientious supporters of the former régime, and some of them were his late father's personal friends. It was therefore impossible to change the *personnel* at once. Alexander had, however, staunch friends in his wife, in his younger brother Constantine and in his aunt the Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna. The latter's luminous personality and intellectual capacity, as well as her keen interest in the promotion of all social and intellectual welfare, had drawn into her circle the best minds, and it was from amongst their midst that the new fellow-workers for the reform were to come forth.

Only gradually the *personnel* of the ministry was changed and men in full sympathy with the Emperor's humane and liberal views were appointed. It was especially in the new Minister of the Interior, Lanskoi, a man of great rectitude and free from class prejudice, that Alexander found a valuable adviser and a whole-hearted supporter of his generous schemes. Lanskoi urged it upon his sovereign that such a vital change as the contemplated abolition of serfdom should not be introduced too suddenly; but that, having once begun, there should be no drawing back. He pleaded with his Imperial master to proceed carefully but persistently, and not to let himself be unduly influenced either by the ardent lovers of innovations or by the obstinate worshippers of the old traditions.

The Emperor had refused to be crowned whilst his country was still in the throes of war; but after the declaration of peace this solemn event had been fixed for the middle of August 1856. In the meantime the Emperor, accompanied by his brothers, visited Finland, where all hearts beat warmly for him, and where he received an enthusiastic welcome. The

motto over the triumphal arch at Åbo expressed the hope of the nation: "Collectasque fugat nubes solemque reducit" ("He puts to flight the gathered clouds and brings back the sun").

In May, accompanied by his ministers, he paid an official visit to Poland, where he spent six days. He granted an amnesty to certain political offenders, and also warmly expressed his thanks to the nation for their bravery in war, and his gratitude for the gallant lives given on behalf of the Empire. In his address to the Estates, and afterwards to the representatives of society who had arranged the brilliant reception and the State ball given in his honour, he told them plainly what his attitude and feelings were towards their nation. He frankly told them that he was willing to let bygones be bygones; that he had the most generous intentions towards them; but that first of all their mutual relationship had to be clearly defined. He wanted order as established by his father: "What my father did was good, and I will uphold it . . . therefore, gentlemen, no vain dreams!" (*point de rêveries!*); for "the happiness of Poland depends on a perfect fusion with the other peoples of the Empire." Those who would persist in separatist dreams he would know how to restrain. He told them that although he preferred to praise and to reward, to raise hope and to call forth gratitude, yet "if necessary, I can punish, and that severely."

The Baltic provinces were also honoured by a visit from the monarch: thus the three Western border countries, acquired by his immediate ancestors, had been personally assured of the Emperor's goodwill.

When, therefore, the coronation took place in the ancient capital, a happy and united nation hailed in Alexander II. the harbinger of peace and prosperity. The prayer offered by the Emperor at this ceremony expressed his consciousness of the greatness of the task before him: "Lord Almighty! do not forsake me in my work—teach and guide me in my great service. . . Let my heart be in Thy hands so that all shall be done for the benefit of those entrusted to me, and to Thy glory. . . ." While the people on their part prayed for him: "That Thy servant our well-meaning sovereign, who has

quieted our anxious hearts, may be endowed with wisdom. Grant that he may be enabled to carry out this service, make his heart tender towards the poor and the needy . . . and grant that the power he will entrust to others may not be wielded in hypocritical pretence of justice. . . ."

It was a brilliant gathering. Not only foreign Powers had sent their representatives, but also the multitudes of tribes and people ruled over by the Tsar of All the Russias, who appeared in their picturesque costumes. His title seemed to acquire reality in face of the various nationalities which thronged Moscow.

When the Emperor, looking pale and wearied after the long ceremonial of the coronation, the heavy crown on his head, showed himself to the eager multitudes, it was a wonderful moment, full of deep significance and symbolical of the future. The delight was the people's, the burden his !

In honour of this momentous occasion he proclaimed an amnesty to all the Decembrists punished in 1825, and to their children he restored their fathers' titles ; the political offenders of 1848, the friends of Petrashevski, were, however, not included in this amnesty. The Tsar also remitted twenty-four million roubles of overdue taxes, and abolished the hated military colonies, etc. The rejoicing in Moscow was unbounded, and the resolution of the Tsar, as expressed by him in the simple but pregnant words, " To change, to pardon, and to restore," were on every tongue. A special medal was struck as a reward to the brave defenders of Sevastopol, and the text engraved on it was expressive of the Emperor's feelings : " On Thee, O Lord, do we trust ; let us never be confounded."

The new era now actually set in, and when, in 1857, the Emperor explained to the assembled marshals of the nobility his firm intention to abolish serfdom, the die was cast. He invited the leaders of the privileged class, who were his natural helpers, to co-operate with him in this great work. In his address to them he said, among other things : " As you yourselves know, the existing manner of possessing serfs cannot remain unchanged. It is better to abolish serfdom from above, than to await the time when it will begin to

abolish itself from below. I request you, gentlemen, to consider how this can be put into execution, and to submit my words to the nobles for their consideration."

In the course of years everybody had come to see and feel the necessity of liberating the serfs : men of all shades of political opinion agreed on this point—they differed merely on the best methods of doing it—all the best elements in society co-operated in preparing for this reform. What a change from the time of Peter the Great ! His successor in the great work of reforming the nation did not stand alone ; Alexander II. was able to surround himself with men ready and anxious to support him in his great scheme for the amelioration of the people.

His was no easy task. Although individuals had on various occasions experimented in this field of research : for example, the Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna and Count Leo Tolstoi, who did something in this line when only nineteen years of age, and others, it was still a great problem how to change absolutely a condition upon which the economic existence of the wealthy classes of society had hitherto depended.

Among the peasants, too, the feeling was rife that the hour of their liberation was drawing nigh. Every time a new ruler ascended the throne the expectation and hope of the serfs had risen, only to be cruelly dashed to the ground. According to the census of 1853, out of the sixty million inhabitants of Russia, forty millions lacked the greatest of human rights—liberty.

The problem of serfdom had not been overlooked by the rulers since Catherine the Great had made it the great subject of discussion in the " Free Economic Society." In 1797 her son, Paul I., had issued a ukase fixing the time limit of service, for until then there had been no established rule with regard to the number of the days in the week masters could legally employ their serfs. The new law fixed it to three days, thus enabling the peasants to work three days for themselves and so get means to pay taxes. The nobles, however, were exempt from taxation.

In 1803, Catherine's grandson, Alexander I., had made it illegal to sell or to give away serfs apart from the land. He

also made it possible for whole families, even whole villages, to become free if a voluntary arrangement between master and serfs could be arrived at. Although the intentions that prompted this law were good, yet it had very little practical effect, and in 1835 there were only one hundred and sixteen thousand such "free agriculturists."

In the Baltic provinces serfdom had been abolished between the years 1816 and 1819, and four hundred thousand serfs were set free; but they were only given personal liberty, without any land. Under the Emperor Nicholas I. the "Secret Commission" worked hard at this problem, studying it in all its bearings, and by 1834 Count Speranski had arrived at a definite conclusion as to what legally constituted serfdom. According to him, as it then stood it was based on an hereditary and mutual responsibility between peasants and proprietors. It was the duty of the peasant to expend one-half of his working powers on behalf of the owner; and it was the duty of the owner to allot to the peasant such portion of land as would enable him, by the expenditure of the other half of his working powers, to provide for the need of his family and for the payment of his taxes. It was manifest that the owner had no legal claim on the person of the serf, but only on his labour, and even this within a fixed time limit. Consequently, the personal enslavement of the peasant was the result, not the cause, of the compulsory labour.

In 1842 it was suggested in the rescript "On the Duties of Peasants" that as the land was fully owned by the proprietor, and the serf had only the usufruct of the part allotted to him, a *modus vivendi* might be arrived at whereby peasants might become owners of land, without, however, being granted personal liberty. But it was precisely on this point of ownership of land that the peasants and the nobility held diametrically opposed views. The people had a deeply rooted conviction that the land belonged to them, under the primary ownership of the Tsar; and that the nobles had been granted lands merely in reward for services rendered to the State. The peasant considered his person the absolute property of the landowner, but the land was his own: "We are yours," they would say, "but the land is ours."

In spite of all the evils of serfdom, there existed a certain solidarity of interests between the landowner and the peasant ; for the economic welfare of the one depended more or less upon that of the other. Also, the personal safety of the serf was looked after by the owner, who, although perhaps most arbitrary in his own treatment of this human chattel, resented the same ill-treatment meted out to it by others.

The whole system, however, was wrong, and led to nothing but moral and social degradation.

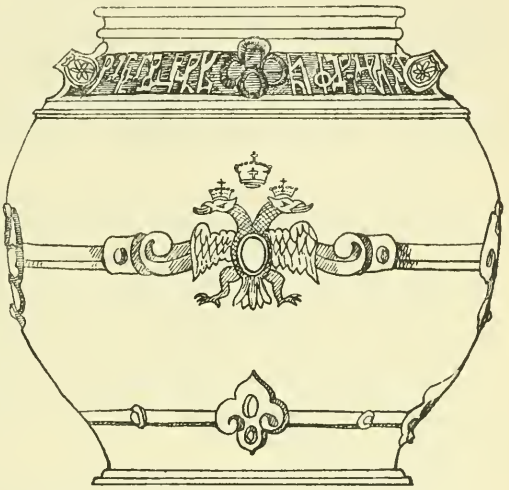
Serfdom, everywhere an evil, was especially out of place in Russia, where it was not the result of foreign conquest in the early dawn of the nation's history, but had been brought about for selfish reasons by the usurper Boris Godounov at the end of the sixteenth century. It is little to be wondered at that again and again, during the centuries which followed, the peasants fell under the delusion that the hour of their liberation from the galling yoke of bondage had struck. It was not liberty in the abstract which the millions of serfs were sighing for, but an effective amelioration of their lot—the deliverance from the arbitrary power of their owners by means of legal guarantees, and to have the right to change their occupation or to choose a new one at will.

It is to the credit of Alexander II. that it was due to his initiative that the emancipation of the serfs was actually brought about. He fully realised the tremendous obstacles which he would have to overcome : he knew that the nobility would not agree without a struggle to be deprived of free labour, therefore, to quote the Emperor's own words : " The autocratic power has created serfdom, and the autocratic power ought to abolish it."

But the Emperor wanted to give the aristocracy the privilege of sharing with him in this great work which he had decided to carry out. He therefore invited provincial assemblies of the nobility to assist him, and a willing response came from the cradle of ancient Russia, from Kiev, Volhynia, Podolia ; St Petersburg, Nijni-Novgorod, and Orel were also eager to do their share. Moscow, however, the heart of Russia, was one of the last of the provinces to come into line with the Emperor's proposal.

A Central Committee "for the amelioration of the lot of the peasant" was created in 1857 to deal with the problem, which simply bristled with difficulties.

Alexander II. was whole-heartedly supported by Lanskoi, then Minister of the Interior, but it was his colleague Milyutin who became the very soul of this great reform. Lanskoi had much difficulty in persuading the Emperor to let Milyutin be his assistant, as the latter was noted for his liberal views. In fact, he had been accused of radical tendencies, but his moral integrity and administrative efficiency finally bore down Alexander's antagonism. Milyutin was, however, only given a temporary appointment; but as the years went on and he still retained his "temporary" position, he earned the nickname of the "temporary-permanent." It was said of Milyutin that "he struck while the iron was hot"; but it might be said of him with equal truth that he patiently and persistently sawed through the iron link in order to break the chain by which the people he loved so dearly were held in bondage.



Bowl of the Tsar Alexei Mikhailovitch (1645–1676).

Milyutin was the nephew of the generous-minded Count Kisselev, that official who had been instrumental in ameliorating the lot of the Crown peasants. His family had for centuries been renowned for true nobility of heart and for a love of enlightenment; from early days he had studied and taken a great interest in the social, political, and economical question. The assistant minister therefore was eminently fitted for the task set before him.

The work accomplished by the Provincial Committees fell far short of the Emperor's expectations. To begin with, they did not know on what principles the Government intended to base the reform, and they were unable to invent them ; and the many opponents of the reform hoped that the whole scheme would fall through as it had done in other reigns. But they did not take into account the iron determination of the Emperor to see the thing through. " The question of the peasants is ever present with me," he remarked to Count Kisselev, who wrote afterwards : " The Emperor is quite decided to carry out the liberation of the serfs ; but he is being hindered and harassed on all sides, and the dangers and difficulties of the undertaking are always being pointed out to him."

Indeed, the members of the Committees were terribly divided in opinion, and the few sympathisers of the meditated reform were outnumbered by the supporters of " landlordism." The crucial point was the way in which a settlement was to be arrived at. For centuries the economic life of the land had been based on serfdom, and the people were accounted rich according to the number of " souls " they owned. To be very rich, for example, one had to possess more than ten thousand " souls."

The greatness of the difficulty may be judged from the fact that one hundred and twenty-seven thousand owners of land and twenty-three million serfs had to be dealt with in the proposed scheme of reform. The market value of serf labour varied according to locality, and the bank rate for " mortgage " was £6 per man, though the actual value was from £17 to £20. In 1859, six hundred thousand peasants were found to be " mortgaged."

No difficulty was anticipated in dealing with one and a half million domestic serfs, who would naturally be granted only personal liberty, which meant that their services in future would be paid for. The real difficulty lay in the provision to be made for agrarian serfs, as the old idea of granting personal liberty without giving any land had been discarded as unsatisfactory.

Forty-six Provincial Committees sat for eighteen months,

and one thousand one hundred and thirty-six landowners worked strenuously; but in the meanwhile the Emperor had entrusted the definite drawing up of the reform to a Special Commission, the members of which had been selected in order to create a majority so as to ensure the passage of those clauses which were offensive to the opponents of this reform. By this action the work of the Provincial Committees had become a mere sham, and feelings were deeply hurt. The Special Commission consisted of members of the bureaucracy and a few representatives of the landed interest. There were also amongst its members such strenuous opposers of the measure as Counts Panin and Orlov; while amongst its advocates were the ardent Slavophiles Samarin and Prince Tcherkasski, and others; but the moving spirit of it all was Milyutin. The Grand Duke Constantine, who put his whole soul into the work, filled admirably the difficult position of chairman, for even in this select body feeling ran high.

Apart from the opposition, there was a vital difference of opinion as to the lines along which the new reforms were to be worked out. Those who were called "Zapadniki" or "Westerners" wished to take Western, and particularly English, institutions as their model, while the Slavophiles desired to evolve a scheme on purely national lines. In the ultimate working out of the scheme for the abolition of serfdom the views of the Slavophiles won the day, while the Westerners had their turn when it came to the elaboration of the legislative and juridical reforms consequent on this great economic change.

The working out, however, of the far-reaching measure took much longer to elaborate than was at first anticipated, and various other reforms, such as of the army, of the navy, and of education, were accomplished before this scheme could be put into practice. The educational reforms made rapid strides, for the Emperor believed in them: the restriction on the number of students at the universities was removed, scholarships were founded, and many schools established; in 1857 the first gymnasia for girls were opened, and women were also permitted to study medicine. It was the need

for nurses in the Crimean War which helped on the medical education of women.

The Emperor willingly listened to suggestions made to him from various sources with regard to reform ; a movement towards political representation began now to make itself felt and each school of thought evolved its own scheme.

In the Provincial Committees, which had been constituted to consider the best ways of arriving at a satisfactory solution of the agrarian problem, many other points with regard to the form of government were naturally discussed, and the struggle between the bureaucracy and the nobility was often very keen. The latter demanded an effectual control over the former, and also advocated publicity as against secrecy. During past years, when all political activity had been prevented, many theories had developed which the doctrinaires now desired to put into practice.

With regard to the great reform under discussion—the abolition of serfdom—all parties, however, finally accepted the strongly pronounced will of the monarch and worked together for its fulfilment. But many of those who objected to the measure on principle, being convinced that it would merely lead to a democratic revolution, tried to influence the trend of the reform for their personal interest. Another party represented merely class interest, and was desirous of creating a landed aristocracy such as exists in England. There was, however, an increasing number of landowners who fully and whole-heartedly supported the Government programme. While the scheme for the abolition of serfdom was carefully threshed out by these various Committees and Commissions, the general welfare of the nation and its economic prosperity were rapidly improving.

Politically, also, Russia was again taking her place amongst the great Powers : she intervened in the affairs of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Montenegro ; and her influence in the Near East reassumed its former weight. On the eastern confines of the Empire, along the Amur and Ussuri and in Manchuria, its borders were being extended and the port of Nicholaevsk built : thus Russian influence became paramount in Northern Asia. Commercial treaties were made with China and Japan,

and the latter opened many of her ports to Russian vessels. In Siberia the mineral wealth was tapped and economic and commercial undertakings were developed.

In 1859 the Caucasus was finally conquered and Shamyl forced to surrender. The famous mountain chief, as a valiant foe, was accorded a good reception in the capital, and a few years later he took the oath of allegiance to the Tsar.

On the Black Sea the harbour of Odessa was built and Baku gained in importance. On the Baltic, Riga, Libau, and Kronstadt were made into first-class harbours. To further commerce a new system of canalisation was planned by which the Amur was to be linked with Lake Baikal and the Black Sea with the Caspian; while in Finland the Saima-kanal, between the Gulf of Bothnia and the Saima Lake, was finished.

In 1857 a commercial treaty was concluded with England, and the Emperor also abolished nearly all import duties. Thus the economic conditions of the nation were recuperating after the terrible illness to which the Crimean War might be compared.

During the years which had elapsed between 1857, when the Emperor made his first public intimation with reference to the proposed reform, and the year 1861, it had formed the chief topic of conversation in every circle of society, and had been threshed out in all its bearings by the Press. The whole atmosphere was impregnated with the spirit of hope and expectation.

CHAPTER XX

THE LIBERATION OF THE SERFS

The Emperor had taken the initiative for the reform, and he now led the nation towards the goal he had indicated in his manifesto at the conclusion of the war.

By the year 1861 the solution of the difficult problem of granting liberty and land to the serfs without ruining their owners had been settled. A compromise was arrived at whereby the proprietors were to be indemnified for the land retained by the peasants. It was decided that every peasant was to remain in possession of his hut and the enclosure in which it stood ; that the land, however, hitherto worked by them for their own benefit, should not become their personal possession but should belong collectively to the whole " Mir " or village community—for the Slavophiles, who had carried the day in the drawing up of the settlement, saw in this ancient and primitive form of collective ownership the basis of Russian national salvation. Many of the landed proprietors, however, saw in it merely legalised communism.

No peasant was to have power to sell his portion of the land, which was divided up *per capita.* Although no longer tied to the soil, the peasant was to remain in close union with it. While free to work elsewhere, in city or service, he yet retained a right to the portion of land allotted to him, which might be cultivated by any member of his family. Not a landless, homeless proletariat was to result from the great reform, but a free and land-owning peasantry.

The principle was sound, but the reformers soon learned by experience that the amount of land set apart for the peasants was absolutely inadequate. Indeed, the difficulty increased with each generation, and ultimately led to a land

famine. Thus the agrarian problem was rendered more acute by the very body which laboured so earnestly and sincerely to find its solution.

According to the new law the peasants were to buy out the land, with the assistance of the State, which was to lend the capital, to be repaid by the Mir within forty-nine years. The landowners were to be compensated not only for the loss of land, but also for the loss of free labour. To arrive at the sum total of money which would have to be paid out, the value of the land, of the free labour, and of the income derived from the Obrok (a direct payment in money made by serfs to compensate their owners for not working on the land) was capitalised at six per cent. For compensation the Obrok was valued at the rate of £3 per man and £1 per woman per year. The total value of the cultivated land was rated at nearly two milliards of roubles.

With regard to the domestic serfs conditions were very simple. Two years after the promulgation of the law of liberty they were to be free to leave their masters' service, but were to have no share in the land. The law, however, safeguarded old or disabled retainers from being dismissed unprovided for. The eighteen odd million peasants of the vast Crown lands, who had hitherto paid a small rent for their holdings, were now to be left in possession free of charge, and the experiments which for several years past had been carried out on the Crown lands with a view to ameliorating the lot of the peasant, such as peasant banks, etc., were now to serve for the building up of the new conditions.

In spite of the bitter opposition of the majority of proprietors, in spite of numerous obstacles and difficulties, the Emperor had never wavered in his intention to liberate the serfs, and at last his cherished scheme was fully elaborated for action.

A member of the Central Committee appointed to draw up the reform describes Alexander II. as "a man of love and kindness who involuntarily draws the hearts of men to himself." Free from all artificial dignity, but simple, sincere, and genuine, the Tsar was at this time a general favourite; the whole nation, in fact, was looking to this one man for the irreversible grant of the greatest of national blessings.

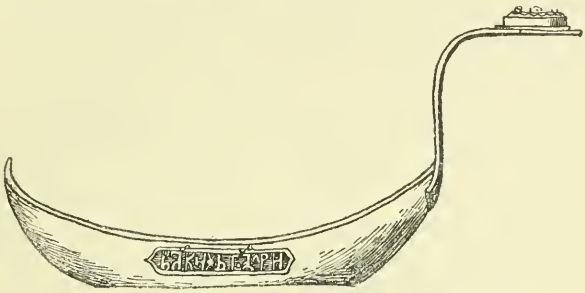
Seven years had elapsed since Alexander's accession to the throne had aroused anticipation in the heart of his lowly subjects; but "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Everywhere a spirit of unrest began to make itself felt, the importance of which the opponents of the reform exaggerated in the hope of alarming the Emperor and thus restraining him from doing all his generous heart had planned. This was realised by many influential people, among them the Grand Duchess Helena Pavlovna. It had been intimated to her that the ferment was increasing, whereupon she wrote to Milyutin: "Something must be done by the eighteenth, or there will be riots; and that would be fatal." Fortunately that "something" was at hand: the manifesto proclaiming liberty to the serfs was already signed by the Emperor.

His attitude with regard to this matter can best be expressed in his words addressed to the Imperial Council on the eve of the promulgation of the manifesto, 28th January 1861: "I consider the liberation of the serfs to be the most vital of all questions for Russia, and on it will depend her development, strength, and power. I am sure that you are all as convinced as I am of the usefulness of the measure about to be passed. Approaching this most important affair, I have never hidden from myself the difficulties which await us, nor do I now; but I firmly rely on the mercy of God, and, convinced of the holiness of this work, I feel sure that God will not forsake us, but will continue to bless us and to prosper our undertaking for the future welfare of our beloved Fatherland."

In preparation for the great event so confidently awaited, the publicist Pogodin, himself a former serf, sent out an appeal to the nation in *The Northern Bee*: "People of Russia, go down on your knees! Pray to God and thank Him for the happiness beyond compare, for the marvellous experience which is awaiting us. . . ." He also suggested that the first money earned by free labour should be dedicated to the building of a cathedral in honour of St Alexander Nevski, the patron saint of Russia.

All over the capital the manifesto was placarded on the walls, and at morning service on Sunday, 5th March 1861,

it was read aloud from the altar steps of every church. Yet the great crowd of serfs gathered to hear the words which opened for them the gates of liberty remained apparently unimpressed and indifferent—the wording of the manifesto was in too official a form and contained too many clauses of conditions to convey much, if anything, to them. But at last emotion was aroused when the people heard these few simple and homely words of the manifesto : " Sign thyself with the sign of the Cross and pray that upon thy free labour may fall the blessing of God, the earnest of thy domestic welfare." To this appeal there was an immediate and heartfelt response.



Imperial Bowl used by the Tsar (17th Century.)

On this memorable Sunday Nature herself seemed in tune with the rejoicing multitudes who in the afternoon thronged the great open space called the " Tsaritsin Polyé," where the Emperor drove in and out amongst the vast crowds. The enthusiasm which the reading of the manifesto had failed to produce now burst forth at the sight of their gracious benefactor. An enthusiasm genuine and deep, greater in fact than ever before had been witnessed in Russia, found vent in mighty shouts of " Hurrah ! " " which made the earth tremble."

The fears of those who had anticipated that the people might be given to riot proved unfounded ; the minute police and military preparations so carefully made were not required ; it was a free and orderly crowd that rejoiced in its liberation. All over the country where the manifesto had been read the same sober rejoicing had taken place. It seemed as if the people were proud to justify the trust reposed in them by the " Tsar-Liberator."

Ten days later a deputation of liberated serfs, a thousand men with their wives and children, came before him to express their deep-felt gratitude. The address they presented to their sovereign contained the following words : " Thou hast deigned to make the anniversary of thy autocratic rule the day of national liberty, and we all know how much thy loving heart has participated in this matter of our liberation. We have come to thank thee for civic rights which thou hast granted us ; to thank thee for life which thou hast renewed to us ; for our present happiness which our grandfathers never knew ; and for the future happiness of our children and grandchildren. We realise that, having received new rights, we are bound to take upon ourselves new responsibilities, and we promise thee to become worthy of the great gifts graciously bestowed upon us by thine Imperial will. We pray that under thy beneficent rule our beloved Fatherland may increase in glory and might. We pray to God that He may prolong thy precious life in order that thou mayest see and taste the fruit of thy planting ; and that, surrounded by the love of the whole nation, thou mayest long be a witness of the happiness of thy liberated people."

It took some time before the peasants fully realised the conditions of their liberation. When the truth began to dawn upon them that it was not an immediate or unconditional liberty which had been granted them, there was a general feeling of disappointment. For a long time they had been convinced that their father the Tsar had not only given them liberty, but had also turned them into actual proprietors of the soil. Many firmly believed that all the conditions which had been read out to them were mere interpolations by the officials, for their faith and trust in their father the Tsar was implicit.

In May 1861, Alexander II. visited Moscow, where a deputation of ten thousand liberated serfs presented him with " bread and salt," and also with a loyal address. The spokesman, an old peasant of nearly seventy years of age, made a homely speech in which he said that words failed him to express the joy and gratitude that welled up in his heart at the thought of their Little Father the Tsar's abundant mercy.

The Emperor walked in and out amongst the crowd, the people falling upon their knees as he passed by them ; but it was not until the Empress had shown herself to them in response to their special request to be permitted to see their "Matushka (Little Mother) the Tsaritsa," that the loving desire of the loyal peasants was satisfied.

The Emperor was deeply impressed by the love shown to him, and felt sustained and uplifted by the consciousness that millions were praying for him ; and he was justified in saying that "no one knows, no one can count, the number of earnest prayers which are being offered up for me."

That a reform of such magnitude would not satisfy all parties was natural—to the Conservatives it was too "liberal," and to the Radicals it was just "liberal" and nothing more. Between the two the Emperor, who was a decided Liberal, had taken his stand ; but it was hard indeed for Alexander to stand firm in the midst of such cross-currents of opinion. The ministers who worked with him upheld him when the vortex of opposing tendencies threatened to carry him off his feet ; for Alexander did not possess that strength of character which would have enabled him to stand alone. But the Emperor who had so persistently refused to give heed to conservative prejudices against the abolition of serfdom, made a great concession to them the moment that reform had become a fact.

History repeated itself ; just as two hundred years previously the Patriarch Nikon was cast aside although his scheme of reform was carried out, so now the reforms so lovingly planned by Lanskoi and Milyutin were entrusted to other hands for execution in detail. Their originators were granted leave of absence !

The new Minister of the Interior, Valouyev, was not suspected of being antagonistic to landlordism, and was therefore acceptable to the Conservative party and the sorely smitten landowners, whom he succeeded in reconciling to the new measure.

All the members of the Special Commission who had worked out the scheme of reform received decorations from the Emperor ; but Milyutin voiced the general feeling of this

band of patriots when he wrote : " To have had the privilege of participating in such a great work is sufficient honour to last for the rest of one's life. . . ."

The great day had come and gone ; the thought of years had found its fruition ; the vague humanitarian intentions of the various rulers with regard to the serfs had at last taken a definite form, and the longings of millions of desolate hearts were satisfied. A great gift had been promised to the people : the next step was to provide an organisation for coping with the new conditions created by such a radical reform. An absolutely new administration was required in order to regulate and carry out the tremendous changes introduced. It was imperative that measures should be taken to prevent anarchy from replacing the abolished arbitrariness ; among other things it was necessary that the millions of serfs who had lived all their lives under tutelage should be trained to habits of economic independence.

It was now the turn of the " Westerners " to see their ideals put into practice. The greatest difficulty was to get hold of the right *personnel*, but gradually, out of the good material which hitherto had been left unused, workers were found. Now that honorary and voluntary work was needed, the pent-up energy of the upper classes found healthy and legitimate outlet in the recognised service in the newly organised bodies for the administration of the rural districts, and the " Arbitrators of Peace," as they were called, carried through successfully the delicate task of settling the land question between proprietor and peasant.

Even the most bitter opponents of the reform, now that it had become a *fait accompli*, accepted the altered conditions with a good grace, and within the allotted time the great work of preparing charters and title-deeds was accomplished.

The appearance of a pretender, who picked up a small following of peasants, and the refusal of certain peasants to fulfil their share in the arrangement, did not affect the manner in which the reform was carried out generally. The great social revolution was brought to a peaceful and amicable conclusion.

In 1862, a year after the great climax in the national life

of Russia had been reached, the Empire celebrated the thousandth anniversary of its foundation. To the people, however, the hero was not Rurik, who in 862 had begun his rule over the few town provinces of ancient Russia, but Alexander II., whose vast dominions extended from the Baltic to the Pacific, from the White Sea to the Black Sea, and the multitudes of whose subjects had hailed in him the Tsar-Liberator.

IV. PERIOD

THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE (1689–1862)

Peter the Great (1689–1725): first Emperor of Russia.
Catherine I. (1725–1727).
Peter II. Alexeievitch (1727–1730): last male representative of the House of Romanoff.
Anna I. Ivanovna (1730–1740).
Regency of Anna Leopoldovna (1740–1741), on behalf of Ivan VI.
Elizabeth Petrovna (1741–1762).
Peter III., Duke of Holstein-Gottorp (1762): grandson of Peter I.
Catherine II. (the Great) (1762–1796).
Paul I. (1796–1801).
Alexander I. (1801–1825).
Nicholas I. (1825–1855).
Alexander II. (Tsar-Liberator) (1855–1881).
Alexander III. (1881–1894).
Nicholas II. (1894–).

CHAPTER XXI

A LINK

(1862–1915)

THE millenary celebration of the Russian Empire was merely an interlude in the great drama of the life of the nation, in which each generation has provided its own plot and a different company of actors. The stage once occupied by Boyars, courtiers, soldiers, and serfs is now filled with members of the landed gentry and the professional classes, spurred on to activity by humanitarian principles or political convictions. Later on the student class appears on the scene, full of zeal, enthusiasm, and power of devotion to an ideal. Lastly, the proletariat has also come forward with its thronging human life. Many events have happened since the year 1862, and the actors in them are, for the most part, drawn from classes which till then had either been voiceless or had hardly existed at all.

As a result of the liberation of the serfs, the whole structure of the nation was broken down and new conditions were created. Out of the *débâcle* of the old a new society arose, a genuine middle class developed, and the old historic class of landowners ceased to be the foundation of the social structure. Many of the small landowners with the loss of their serfs lost their means of subsistence—for the money paid them by the Government was soon spent—and had now themselves to earn their daily bread. The new middle class comprised all who could lay claim to education, including the sons of the village clergy,[1] of shopkeepers as well as of artisans, and even

[1] The status of the clergy in Russia, both socially and intellectually, is exceedingly low, and can in no way be compared with that of the clergy of Western Europe, more especially of England.

of peasants. No longer caste, but personal culture, determined social status, and higher education was open to all who desired it.

In this new society were also merged the so-called "penitent nobles"—men who had come to realise how excessively privileged they as a class had been in the past contrasted with the utter denial of legal rights to the serfs. They now devoted themselves to the cause of furthering the welfare of the liberated serfs, and, forsaking the life of ease and leisure they might have enjoyed, now joined the ranks of the workers.

Yet another class—that of the proletariat—was created. At this period commercial enterprise rapidly developed in consequence of capital having been set free by increased circulation of currency as against wealth tied up in the serfs, and the peasants being free to live where they liked, many flocked to the towns, where they became factory hands.

This release of capital also furthered industrial enterprise, and the artisan, who had hitherto carried on manual industry, was now unable to hold out against the competition of machinery. Forced to close his own small workshop, he swelled the ranks of the proletariat.

Thus the whole social condition of the nation had changed. The new classes required civic rights, for which, unfortunately, no provision had been made, and the existing laws lacked elasticity. We might well compare the conditions thus created to the discomfort felt by a youth who has outgrown his clothes, but for whom his parents do not seem to realise the necessity of providing larger garments, proposing instead to let out the seams!

In the case of the nation certain reforms were promised to alleviate the evident social inconvenience, but, with the exception of the liberation of the serfs and of the judicial reform, they were only partially carried out. Fortunately, nothing could undo the liberation of the serfs; yet even that reform was modified in order to satisfy the clamour of the old aristocratic party.

Too late did the Government realise the truth—that new wine must be put into new bottles. In his official report to the Emperor Nicholas II., Count Witte thus describes the

exigencies of the political situation which had to be faced: "Russia has outgrown and burst the bonds of her political structure. Her aim is to secure a constitutional Government based on the foundation of civic liberty."

As this chapter is intended merely to link the year 1862 with the present day, only the principal landmarks of the national progress in its broader aspect can be noted.

1863.		Revolution in Poland.
1864.	January 1.	Local self-government granted to the provinces (Semstvo).
,,	,,	Trial by jury introduced.
,,	April 4.	Attempt on the life of Alexander II. by Karakosov.
1865.		Tashkent comes under Russian rule.
1870.		The Treaty of Paris is annulled by Russia.
1873.		Khiva comes under Russian suzerainty.
1875.		Khokand is annexed.
1877.	April 24.	War is declared against Turkey.
1878.	February 19.	Treaty of San Stefano.
1879.	February 8.	Peace of Constantinople.
,,	April 2.	Beginning of revolutionary terrorism. Attempt on the life of the Emperor by Solovyev.
1881.	March 1.	Alexander II. killed.
,,	,,	Alexander III. ascends the throne.
,,	,,	Beginning of the influence of Pobyedonostsev, lay head of the Holy Synod, which lasts until 1905.
,,	,,	Suspension of the ordinary civic laws which are superseded by temporary coercive laws promulgated for a period of six months only, but which, as a fact, have continued in force up to the present.
,,	,,	Limitation of the representative principle of self-government.
,,	,,	Creation of the Zemski Natchalniki—a new class of official, appointed from amongst the local nobility, endowed with special power over the peasants, including that of inflicting corporal punishment.
,,	,,	Limitation of trial by jury.
1885.		Threatened rupture with England over Afghanistan.
1894.		Death of Alexander III.
,,		Nicholas II. comes to the throne.
1896.		Coronation of the Emperor. At the festive celebration three thousand people are crushed to death on the field of Khodynka in Moscow.
1897.		Introduction of the Government drink monopoly.
,,		Introduction of the gold standard.
1898.		Russia takes Port Arthur.
1902.		Beginning of reaction.

1903.		Franco-Russian alliance.
1904.	February 2.	Japanese War.
,,		Battle of Laoyang.
,,	July 15.	Plehve, Minister of the Interior, is killed.
1905.	January 2.	Fall of Port Arthur.
,,	,, 5.	Red Sunday. Led by Father Gapon, twenty thousand unarmed workmen proceed to the Winter Palace to ask for political and civic rights. They are met by machine-guns.
,,	February 4.	The Grand Duke Sergei is killed in Moscow.
,,	March 10.	Fall of Mukden.
,,	May 27.	Battle of Tchushima.
,,	June.	Mutiny on the battleship *Potemkin.*
,,	September 5.	Peace with Japan is concluded : Treaty of Portsmouth.
,,		Riots in Odessa and conflagration of the harbour.
,,	Oct. 10–17.	General strike in Russia and Finland.
		The Emperor issues a manifesto granting a constitution : "To grant to the people permanent foundations of civic freedom on the principles of actual inviolability of person, liberty of conscience, of speech, of meeting, and of association."
,,	October 18.	Beginning of the counter-revolution. Pogroms take place in two hundred cities, directed not only against Jews, but against the progressive elements, *e.g.* Nijni-Novgorod and Tomsk.
,,	December 6.	Revolution in Moscow. Barricades.
1906.		Reorganisation of the army and navy.
,,	April 27.	First Duma assembles. Immediate cessation of revolutionary excesses.
,,	July 10.	Dissolution of the first Duma.
,,	,, 17.	Revolution and mutiny in Sveaborg.
,,	,, 19.	Mutiny in Kronstadt.
,,	August 10.	Revolution in Sevastopol.
,,	,, 12.	Attempt on the life of the Prime Minister, P. A. Stolypin.
,,	,, 19.	Aggravated reaction. Trial by field court-martial introduced. One hundred and six people are hanged in the first week, and in the following six months (February 1907), never less than one hundred a month.
1907.	February.	Second Duma meets.
,,	September 1.	Dissolution of the second Duma. Change of electorate law.
,,		Empire quieted down after revolution, no longer any revolutionary excesses, but reaction continues. The rights restored to Finland in 1905 are curtailed.
,,		Anglo-Russian entente.

1912.		Agrarian reform.
1914.	August 2.	War with Germany.
,,	,,	Abolition of the drink monopoly.
,,	,,	Prohibition of the sale of intoxicants.
,,	,, 5.	Proclamation by the Grand Duke Nicholas promising Autonomy to Poland.

The political development of the nation, with all its startling vicissitudes, during the fifty-four years which followed the great reforms introduced by Alexander II., might be forcibly illustrated by a chart. Reform and reaction follow each other with striking regularity; but in spite of this there has been on the whole a steady upward movement. This encouraging fact inspires the lover of Russia with the hope that soon her progress will be uninterrupted, and that after the war a new era will open up for the nation.

Professor Vinogradoff thus voices this anticipation in a letter to the *Times* of 14th September 1914: "It is our firm conviction that the sad state of reaction and oppression is at an end in Russia, and that our country will issue from this momentous crisis with the insight and strength required for the constructive and progressive statesmanship of which it stands in need." So much for her future domestic policy.

As to her foreign policy the same writer says: "Russia is so huge and so strong that material power has ceased to be attractive to her thinkers. Nevertheless, we need not yet retire into the desert, or deliver ourselves to be bound hand and foot by 'civilised' Germans. . . . Russia also wields a sword—a charmed sword, blunt in an unrighteous cause but sharp enough in the defence of right and freedom."

CHAPTER XXII

THE UKRAINA: THE COSSACKS OF THE DNIEPER, OR THE KNIGHTS OF THE ZAPOROGIAN SETCHA

The mist which covers the early days of Russian history hides also the origin of the Cossack nation, but the psychological causes, as well as the political and economic conditions, which went towards the making up of the warrior race are well known to historians.

Ethnologically the original Cossacks were not a distinct people, they were inhabitants of Little Russia, the cradle of ancient Russia; historically, however, they developed in the course of centuries into a separate race.

What Tacitus wrote of the love of freedom amongst the Slavs in general has become true of the Cossacks in particular. It may be that the very vastness of their land predisposed this people to a hatred of confines and limitations, for geographical position plays a great rôle in the shaping of national character, which is again accentuated by political conditions. The situation of their country as a borderland had a definite and lasting influence on the development of the Cossacks, in whom this love of freedom found its purest and strongest expression.

To the Russian mind "Kazatchestvo"—"Cossackdom"—stands for a certain conception and organisation of life, distinctive in the various manifestations of its social, administrative, and political existence. It also always stands for the idea of liberty and independence. "Free as the Cossack" has become proverbial, as has that other saying, "Cruel as the Cossack." But it must be borne in mind that their ruthless cruelty was not more ferocious than that of their adversaries, and was always on a level with the accepted

war morality of those days when the Cossacks played such an important part.

By the middle of the twelfth century Kiev, the premier principality of ancient Russia, had lost her supremacy. The political power had shifted to Suzdal and Vladimir. This decline, however, was not brought about by political reasons alone, but also by economic conditions. The population had steadily decreased, partly owing to the fact that in the ancient Russia of the tenth to the thirteenth century forced labour had been a *sine quâ non*. The only labourers were captives of war, and her princes therefore made frequent war on one another for the sake of securing prisoners. Another cause of the depopulation and corresponding weakness of Southern Russia was her position on the frontier ; hence the name "Ukraina," or Borderland. East of the Dnieper stretched the endless steppes, where roamed those tribes of nomads who were constantly attacking the Russians ; and thus the increasing insecurity of the country gradually kept all foreign merchants from visiting Kiev.

The principality became depopulated, and the city being no longer a trading centre, the ancient capital of Russia sank to an insignificant position. In 1240 she was reduced to ruins by the hordes of Batu Khan, who were devastating the whole country ; and for the next fifty years a veil is drawn over the fate of the once famous city.

The majority of the surviving natives of Southern Russia, forsaken by their princes, who had fled into Galicia, themselves fled the country. They left the beautiful land for the gloomy pine forests and marshlands of Lithuania, which were more in tune with their despondent souls than was the beauty of the flowering steppes. The battle with stern nature, the hardships endured in their country of refuge, whose unfertile soil was so different from that of their former home, influenced the character of these Slavs, causing them to develop into brave, strong, passionate people.

While Russia was still lying in misery, poverty, and subjugation to the Mongol yoke, Gedemin, Prince of Lithuania, led this new nation back to their old haunts—to the shores of the mighty river Boristhenes, or Dnieper. His followers,

who were a rude and wild people, clad in skins and worshippers of Perun, the old god of the Russians, became famous under their great leader. Gedemin took from the Tatars all the country east of Poland and north of the Crimea, but so great was his political wisdom, that he managed to keep friends with them while yet paying them no tribute. After his death in 1340 he was succeeded by his son Olgerd.

From that time two separate Russias began to develop : one in the middle and the north, owing allegiance to the Tatars ; the other in the south, owing a nominal allegiance to Lithuania, but without having any real union with that principality. For the Lithuanian rulers had left the Russian lands pretty much to themselves and to the rule of their own princes.

The Ukraina became the battlefield of three nations—the Turks, the Tatars, and the Poles. It was a land of terror, so exposed to raids by Tatars that only a warlike people could have dared to live in it. The country was rich and fertile : the northern part was covered with oak forests inhabited by wild beasts, while in the south the vast prairies or steppes teemed with game. Through these flowed the Dnieper, the right shore of which was rocky and steep ; but on the left bank, which was flat and open, lay wide stretches of meadow-land covered with lovely bright flowers. Although this land was so fertile, it was not worth while to grow much corn, for almost invariably the Tatars came and destroyed the crops ; and even if the grain had had a chance to ripen, it could not have been exported, as on the lower reaches thirteen rapids hindered the navigation of the Dnieper. This river formed a boundary between the Tatars who roamed over the wild prairie and that desperate people who carried their lives in their hands—the Cossacks.

The many islands of this river, covered as they were with high reeds, served as a refuge for the fugitives, runaways, and outlaws who joined the people whom Gedemin had led back from Lithuania.

Every January, when the snow made soft ground for the hoofs of their unshodden horses, an army of from forty to fifty thousand Tatars would invade Poland, to do which

they had to cross the Ukraina. Terrible was the devastation caused by their annual raids. They took back with them thousands of prisoners, whom they sold into Asia Minor and Turkey, where there was a regular market for the fair-skinned captives. A contemporary writes that these Tatars treated their prisoners with atrocious barbarity : " their brutish nature causing them to commit a thousand enormities ; it would move the most insensible to compassion to hear the cries and lamentations of the unhappy people, and would grieve the most stony heart to see husbands parted from their wives, mothers from their children."

As the Cossacks grew in number and strength they repulsed these invaders and acted as a bulwark for Western Europe against the inroads of the terrible Tatars. " Death to the infidel ! " became their war-cry ; and as at an earlier time in Western Europe knights went forth to fight for the Cross against the Crescent, so these Slavonic warriors gradually formed themselves into the Knighthood of the Zaporogian Setcha, whose object it was to war against the enemies of Christianity. For these wild people had become devout and ardent adherents of the Russian Church, and considered attacks upon the Tatars as moral, virtuous, and pleasing to God.

At the same time it must be admitted that, although they fought originally for their faith and against the oppressors, they came in process of time to love war for its own sake and for the sake of the booty it brought them. The very name of Kazak, given them by the Tatars, is descriptive of their manner of life ; for it can mean freebooter as well as lightly armed soldier.

The number of these knights increased as time went on, their ranks being constantly reinforced by newcomers ; for this society attracted to it, not only men who loved fighting and danger for its own sake, but those who sought refuge and safety, as this knighthood was also a brotherhood for mutual protection. It is a peculiar characteristic of the Slavs that instead of resisting and thereby trying to alter the conditions which hindered the full play of their liberty, they simply moved on ; and the very vastness of the country which they inhabited

lent itself to these wanderings. This tendency is illustrated in one of their proverbs : "The fish goes where the water is deepest ; and the man where he fares best." Those who ran away to join the Cossacks were of all sorts, and all were accepted by the brotherhood, on the one condition—that they were, or would become, members of the Russian Church.

Owing to intermarriage with Tatar maidens, a new type of people gradually evolved, and the almond-shaped eyes and black hair of the Dnieper Cossacks were the result of this mixing of races. East and West met in this nation : by geographical position and by religion European, it was by custom and manner half Asiatic ; and the resultant blend of characteristics made the Cossacks peculiarly adapted to their surroundings and fitted for their occupation, which may almost be termed their natural element—war. In them were combined European carefulness and Asiatic *insouciance*, simplicity and slyness, activity and indolence, propensities for development and progress and an apparent disregard for all culture. Out of the melting-pot of centuries had been evolved a nation renowned for bravery but notorious for ferocity.

It is to this nation that the Zaporogian Cossacks owe their origin. They formed a brotherhood, a spontaneous union of free men and open to all those who wished to be free, the aim and object of which was to ensure safety and independence. To uphold this ideal the Cossacks were ever ready to fight against their more powerful neighbours, whether Tatars, Poles, or Russians.

The fact that such an organisation of apparently lawless people could exist and flourish is a proof that it answered a need. This new society was a reaction against the forms of government both of Poland and Russia, which did not satisfy the needs, longings, and aspirations of the people, who therefore burst through barriers and bonds and joined the Zaporogians.

When, in 1386, Lithuania had come into union with Poland, the Russian lands were drawn into more direct intercourse with the latter, although the Ukraina had a separate administrative organisation. The territory was divided into Voye-

vodstovs, presided over by a Voyevod—a kind of lord-lieutenant,—and into districts, under Starostas ; the cities being governed by castellans or commandants.

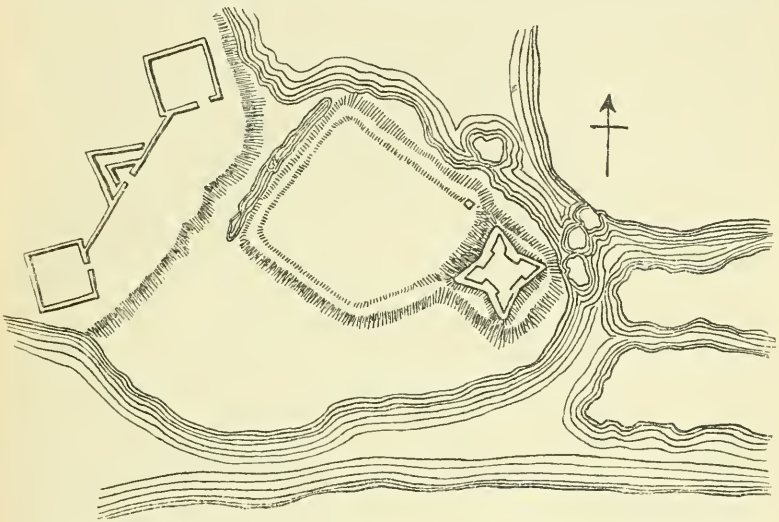
Yagiello, Grand Duke of Lithuania, who had joined the Church of Rome on becoming King of Poland, took special care to make a satisfactory settlement with regard to his Greek Orthodox subjects, especially those of the Ukraina ; he granted the nobles equal privileges with the Roman Catholic Lithuanians. This union of Lithuania with Poland was advantageous to these Russian lands, for Western influence and culture began to spread and flourish in the cities, especially in Kiev, which once again began to play a leading part in the intellectual life of the country.

By the union of Lublin in 1569 Lithuania was incorporated into Poland and certain parts of her territory came under the direct rule of the Polish crown ; among others being the Ukraina, which comprised the ancient principalities of Kiev, Poltava, and part of Tchernigov. From this time onward Polish influence became paramount, and Polonisation in manners and customs was introduced ; unfortunately, this included serfdom, hitherto unknown in Russian lands.

The agrarian problem, *i.e.* the lack of a settled population, had been for centuries a source of weakness to the Ukraina. Enterprising Starostas and Boyars, however, had begun to solve it in a way of their own: they offered land, free of taxation, to the peasants, who, in truly Russian fashion, were always migrating from place to place to find better pasture. As time went on whole families settled under the protection of the Zaporogian Brotherhood ; and thus gradually hamlets and towns sprang up and fortresses were built to protect them against the Tatar tribes of the steppes and also against the Turks. A contemporary thus describes conditions in the Ukraina in the sixteenth century : " The peasant goes to work with a gun on his shoulder and a sword at his side."

The people of the Ukraina came to be divided into two distinct sections—the urban population and the free peasants, all Cossacks. But, however peaceful the occupation of these people, every man had to be primarily a warrior who, at the first sound of alarm would drop his tools and exchange them

for the sword. The signal for mobilisation reached the men through their captains, who appeared in market-place and on village green, calling out : " Ho, ye distillers and brewers —ye have brewed enough beer and lolled on your stoves and stuffed your fat carcases with flour long enough ; ye ploughmen, ye reapers of buckwheat, ye tenders of sheep, ye danglers after women—enough of following the plough and courting women, wasting your fighting strength. Arise ! win honour and glory ! " These words acted like sparks on



Plan of Part of the Zaporogian Settlement on the Dnieper Islands.

dry wood, and keen, brave soldiers were at once ready for action. They marched off joyously to join the vanguard of the nation at headquarters on the islands of the Dnieper.

It is from the year 1568 that the society of warriors came to be known as the famous and dreaded " Zaporogian Setcha " from beyond the rapids.

The Cossacks gradually formed themselves into a republic, the organisation of which was as simple as it was effective. From amongst themselves they elected the man most renowned for daring, strength, and cunning to be their chief—their Ataman, to whom they had to yield implicit obedience. Next to him in importance was the " Pissar " or scribe, who was

responsible for all the diplomatic and clerical work of the republic.

As their numbers were increased by newcomers it was found necessary to subdivide the Zaporogian Setcha, which was the vanguard of the nation, into groups or "Koorens," a name derived from the word "smoke," suggesting the idea of camp-fires enjoyed in common. Each Kooren was under a "Kotchevoi" Ataman, whose duty it was to divide the spoil and deal out the provisions. He too was elected from amongst the members of the community, but the tenure of his office was precarious, as in time of peace he could be deprived of his office by the demand of even one dissatisfied man; in war time, however, all grievances had to be held over, for the Cossacks would never commit the folly of "swapping horses while crossing the stream."

The Ataman, as elected chief, ruled over the whole republic of the Ukraina, but laws were made or confirmed by the "Circle," or Assembly of all the people, whose most cherished privilege was the right to elect their own ruler.

The mighty river Dnieper was useless for ordinary navigation, but when it was swollen the Cossacks were able to shoot the rapids on their flat-bottomed boats, to the sides of which bundles of reeds were tied to prevent them from sinking even if filled with water. In fact, no man was considered a fully fledged Zaporogian until he had navigated the river from end to end. Between these rapids lay islands varying in size and character. The Sieur de Beauplan, who in the seventeenth century acted as engineer to the Poles, tells us that many of the rocky islands were eminently suited for forts, some even for towns, while others were covered with wild vines or trees; others again were only marshland, owing to the frequent flooding of the river. According to this authority, a thousand small islands formed a labyrinth on which the "Brothers" hid their treasures during their absence on expeditions; each man having his own particular spot where he buried his treasures.

The high banks of the Dnieper made it difficult for the Tatars, who lived on the other side, to attack them unawares. But there was one place where the river was narrow and the

shore flatter ; there the Tatars made frequent attempts to land, while the Cossacks kept a perpetual look-out. But at the mouth of the river, which was three miles wide, the Turks built a fort to prevent the Cossacks from entering the Black Sea. The daring Cossacks, however, only laughed at these precautions, and on dark nights, under cover of the high reeds near the right shore, they would slip by on their flat-bottomed boats and thus evade the watchful eye of the Turkish garrison. Once out on the Black Sea, the Cossacks visited and pillaged the coasts of Anatolia, Bulgaria, and Roumania, and at times even threatened Constantinople itself, rich booty being the usual result of such expeditions.

On these water raids they behaved like true water pirates : they attacked and boarded merchant vessels, and, after killing the crew, took from the ship all that was of value to them and then sank it, as they did not know how to navigate larger vessels than those to which they were accustomed. It was only when they chanced to meet a Turkish man-of-war that they fared ill, for they were unable to face a cannonade. After such an encounter, perhaps only one-third of their number, or even less, would return to tell the tale.

It was in battle on land, however, that Cossack superiority showed itself ; one Cossack was considered equal to a hundred Poles or two hundred Tatars. This was due not only to their great skill, courage, and daring, but also to a method of fighting peculiar to themselves. A contemporary describes it as follows : " They march between two files of carts, being protected by eight or ten waggons in the front and as many in the rear ; the cavalry surrounding them on all sides. If an attack comes, these carts are quickly formed into a kind of fortress from which the Cossacks can fire as if entrenched ; and as the men in the back rows hand loaded guns to the front ranks, continuous and quick firing can be kept up." Descriptions of Cossack battles, and especially of the hand-to-hand encounters of the cavalry, take the reader back to Homeric days ; for the Cossacks had much in common, not only in character but in manner of fighting, with the heroes who won glory on the plains of Troy.

Fearlessness and courage were their chief characteristics.

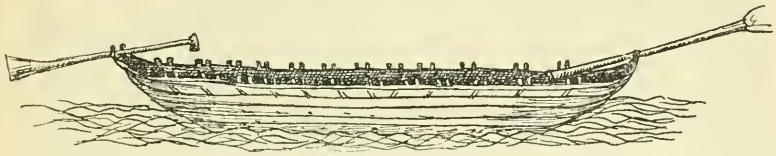
No tears were to be shed for those fallen in battle or taken into captivity, but at night, while sitting round the blazing camp-fire, the exploits of these comrades were praised in song. And as they listened the flame of revenge leapt up in the hearts of the older men, and a desire to become worthy of such praise was kindled in the breasts of the younger warriors.

In time of peace, life was one long holiday on the island settlement of the Zaporogian Setcha. There every young Cossack had to serve his apprenticeship as a warrior. While some of these youths had already spent years of study at the Academy of Kiev and could quote Latin authors, the majority lacked all education and were simply rude and fearless soldiers, but once in the Setcha, all men were equal in the careless, happy-go-lucky existence of the Brotherhood. This was the heyday of Cossack life, and even older and married men would leave their homes for months or years at a time to join their comrades—to carouse with them and to discuss their former deeds of war, or to join them in campaigns. The days were spent drinking, dancing, and gambling ; and if all the loot had been wasted in riotous living, there were always Jews' shops to be ransacked. Although frugal in their private life, the Cossacks delighted in generous display.

In this free and joyous existence woman, however, had no part, and no woman was ever permitted to set foot on the settlement on the Dnieper isles. Cossack songs and ballads, of which two absolutely different kinds have been preserved, depict this strict separation of the sexes.

It is only through poetry that anything about the woman's life comes to be known. These poems are full of sadness : they express the mother's grief at her son's departure to join the Brotherhood, or the young wife's sorrow at having to part from her newly wedded husband, the memory of a few happy weeks being all that is left to her. All the songs of the women are full of tender love, pathos, and melody, while those of the men express the strength, joy, and power of those who gladly exchange the quiet and ease of home life for the romance of deeds and danger, or for uninterrupted holiday-making with their comrades. The irresponsible carousing at the Setcha and every action in battle, whether victorious

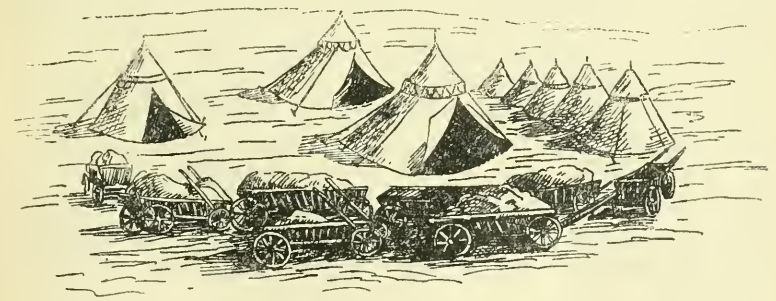
combat or death on the battlefield, are depicted in these songs, which are dramatic and full of poetry—though references to nature are made only to accentuate the feelings and experiences of the Cossacks. These ballads also set forth the loyalty of the members of the Brotherhood to each



Cossack Boat.

other, and their faithfulness to the Church, which latter was perhaps the strongest incentive to action.

These two virtues comprised the very simple code of honour of this knighthood. In his own eyes the Cossack was primarily a *Christian* knight, who fought for his faith against the infidel; but later he defended his Greek Orthodox faith against the Roman Catholic Poles with equal devotion. This religious fervour, however, which showed itself in obedience to the priests and scrupulous attention



Cossack Camp.

to the feasts and fasts of the Church, entailing nine months' abstention from meat, did not influence the warriors in their moral conduct; and if they had any qualms, their conscience was quickly salved by a rich donation of looted treasure to the Church. Nor did their devoutness prevent them from hard drinking: they saw no sense in drinking spirits except to get royally drunk. However, the moment war was

declared or a raid decided upon, all Cossacks became strict abstainers, and anyone found drinking was immediately hanged. They realised their own incapacity for moderation, and knew only too well how fatal drunkenness was to success, and how necessary sobriety in order to keep on the alert against sudden attacks of the enemy.

In the sixteenth century, when the Cossacks step into the full light of history, many Polish magnates had encroached on Cossack land, and Poland had already obtained feudal power over the republic of the Zaporogian Setcha, much of its fighting being done at the request of the Poles; yet any attempt at interference with their liberties and privileges was always keenly resented.

As the Cossacks loved fighting for fighting's sake, they were always glad to find a pretext for going to war on their own account. Various pretenders found in them willing supporters, and this gave their virility a definite object and outlet. It did not matter to them in the least who the pretender was, and during the sixteenth century they fought on behalf of four aspirants to the throne of Moldavia, one of whom was a Greek and another a Serb. The King of Poland, however, forbade them to give hospitality to these bold adventurers, as Moldavia was his vassal state.

The Cossacks were always open to a bid, and in one case where the Sultan Murad failed, the German Emperor Rudolf of Hapsburg succeeded in obtaining their services. In 1594 he sent a special envoy to ask their help against the Turks. The envoy brought them presents—silver trumpets, a standard with the Imperial eagle, and money, but the Cossacks did not consider this enough, and made excuses until more was offered.

In his diary the envoy describes minutely in what manner and how many times the Cossacks met in council to consider his offers, till at last they were found acceptable; whereupon they declared their willingness "to fight the enemy of the Cross, with the help of God." They were ready to go against Perikop in the Crimea or "wherever the Almighty or the wind will send their ships." After the Cossacks had presented the Austrian with sable and black-fox furs, he returned to

Regensburg accompanied by two Cossack delegates. This gentleman seemed most favourably impressed by "the Knights," which title he readily accorded them. He describes them as "a brave and joyous people, trained from their youth up in the manner of war, and acquainted with the ways of both Tatar and Turk."

Poland, however, found the free republic a perpetual thorn in her side; for not only did the Cossacks, when bored by inactivity, raid some Polish town and thus procure for themselves diversion and booty, but they also welcomed into their ranks the runaway serfs of the Polish magnates. They refused to hand over these unfortunates to their Polish masters, for it was a point of honour with the Cossacks never to betray those who came to them for protection. A contemporary says that, while the masters lived in Paradise, the serfs lived in Purgatory. No wonder these peasants formed themselves into robber bands called "Haidamaks," and as such became a terror to their former masters.

At last the wise and far-seeing King Stefan Bathory (1576–86) found ways and means, not only to render the Cossacks innocuous, but also to make use of them by attaching them more closely to Poland. He sent an envoy to them with presents—a standard, a baton, and a seal—and offered to recognise their chief, the Ataman or Hetman, as an official of the Polish crown. He also invited six thousand Cossacks to join his army, two thousand to be on active service and four thousand in reserve. To each man he promised one fur coat and one ducat a year as pay. This new army of "registered Cossacks" (under which designation they formed part of the Polish military organisation) cost the king one-fourth of his royal revenues.

However, this overture was not successful in bringing about a definite settlement, as all Cossacks wanted to be recognised as enlisted warriors; for it was the ambition of those Zaporogians whom the Polish nobles claimed as runaway slaves to acquire equality with the original free-born Ukrainians.

It was impossible for the king to grant this ambitious request without insulting his nobles. Finally an edict was

issued to the Ukraina, according to which six thousand of the Cossacks were allowed to retain the right to carry arms, and these were to be enrolled into regular Cossack regiments, while the rest of the people were to go back into bondage. This order divided the nation into two distinct sections: the enlisted and the unenlisted—or the registered and the unregistered, as the Poles called them. The abrogation of their rights met with violent opposition on all sides; the unenlisted refused to become serfs, while the enlisted were dissatisfied with the refusal of their demand to be put on an equality with the Polish warrior class or "Szlachta." Three Cossack insurrections followed, one of which was due to the increasing irritation caused by the proselytising efforts of the Jesuits, who wielded great influence and power in Poland. The Ruthenians or Ukrainians met their attempts with stubborn resistance, for the methods employed by the Jesuits were both vexatious and insulting; for instance, the Church fees were farmed out to Jews, who held the keys of the Russian churches and levied taxes on every baptism, marriage, and funeral.

It was this double tyranny of Jesuit and Jew which drove the population of the Ukraina to appeal to the Zaporogian Setcha for help and protection. Thus began the wars with Poland, which lasted off and on for over a century. They were waged by the Poles in the name of religion, with such savage fanaticism that horrors were perpetrated which can only have been equalled by the Spaniards in South America; while the Cossacks replied with reprisals no less terrible.

Unfortunately, the successors of wise Stefan Bathory did not carry on his conciliatory policy; they failed to realise the strength and importance of the Cossacks, and by irritating attacks on their liberty, and interference with their national religion, alienated a people who were as bitter foes as they were staunch friends.

From 1612 to 1622 we find the Cossacks enjoying a period of prosperity under their Ataman, Peter Konaszewicz. They fought on the Polish side against Russia and Turkey; they plundered the Crimea, attacked the northern coast of Asia Minor, conquered the Turkish fleet, and even burned the

suburbs of Constantinople. But although Poland concluded peace with Turkey in 1621, the Ataman continued fighting on his own account; this act of defiance served the Poles as a pretext for finally crushing the unruly Cossacks. A general was sent to treat with them, ostensibly to restrain them from making raids into Turkey, but in reality to destroy them. The Cossacks believed the false promises made to them, only to find themselves treacherously caught in a trap. They were forced to comply with the limited registration and were compelled to burn their ships, and the "unregistered" had to sell their possessions and return within three months to their former masters. All this led in 1630 to a new rebellion against Polish arrogance and oppression.

In 1632 Cossack delegates appeared at the Polish Diet: they demanded the vote, an increase in the number of "registered," and the official recognition of the Greek Church. Although the vote was denied them, they obtained the last demand. The then ruling Metropolitan of Kiev was Peter Mohyla—a man to whom Russia as a whole and not only the Ukraina owes much. It was he who revived scientific and scholastic life by founding the Academy of Kiev, from which also Moscow derived her teachers. What their Ataman Konaszewicz had done for their political existence, Mohyla did for the intellectual life: he strengthened and developed the national self-consciousness of the people of the Ukraina, and neither Polish nor, later on, Russian oppression has ever succeeded in destroying the claims of the Ruthenians to be a nation.

It was unfortunate that the king who so wisely granted the Cossacks religious liberty should have failed to satisfy their political aspirations; as a matter of fact, conditions were only made worse, for now even the "registered" were deprived of their rights and their Ataman was superseded by a Polish official, "the Hetman of the Crown," as he was called.

To enforce these unjust laws, fearful acts of repression were committed. The Polish Government did not heed the warnings of the more far-seeing of its members, who contended that, although to deprive the Cossacks of their rights might result in benefits to the few, it was sure to be a danger to

the State as a whole. The economic interests of the Polish nobility, however, gained the day. As was only natural, the Cossacks resented this tyranny, but bloody war was made on them till they were crushed.

After this period of oppression, peace reigned in the Ukraina for ten years, but it was only the calm before the storm. Occasionally delegates were sent to the king to complain of the existing conditions, which were rapidly becoming unbearable; but he was helpless, for he himself suffered from the arrogant domination of the aristocracy.

At last a great insurrection broke out under Bogdan Hmielnitski, the Cossack Scribe, whose son had been killed and who had been robbed of his wife and lands by a Polish official. He appealed to the king, but found no redress for his injuries. It was whispered, however, that the king had privately pointed out to him that he still possessed a good sword. The Zaporogian Setcha made common cause with Hmielnitski, whose grievance caused the smouldering embers of the whole of the Ukraina to burst into flame, and the watchword of the Cossacks was "Death to the Polish nobles!" and "Death to the Jesuits!" Though the Cossacks hated Islam, they hated the Roman Church even more at that time, and therefore had no compunction in asking the Tatars to help them against the common foe. Hmielnitski and his followers, however, explicitly declared that their rising was not against King and Government, but only against their oppressors.

Genuinely anxious to remove the causes of the trouble, the king, Vladislav, despatched a commission to inquire into the matter; but at the same time, contrary to the wish of the king, an army under the Crown Hetman Potocki invaded the Ukraina. He was defeated, taken prisoner, and six thousand of his men killed.

Just then the king died (1648). The Diet was divided as to the best manner of dealing with the Cossacks, those "rebels by nature." One party desired to come to a lasting and satisfactory understanding with them, while the other demanded their extermination. At last a compromise was hit upon: an envoy was sent to treat with the Cossack leader,

View of the destroyed tower of Nicholas, the Arsenal, etc., in the Kremlin, A.D. 1812.

From a contemporary drawing.

while simultaneously an army was to hold itself in readiness to strike. The envoy failed in his mission, and the great army of two hundred and thirty thousand men, which had been concentrated on the frontier, succumbed one night to panic and fled. The whole camp fell into the hands of Hmielnitski, who now invested Lemberg, from which he levied seven hundred thousand gulden. He then attacked Zamose, and, while he was besieging that fortress, his delegates brought sufficient pressure to bear upon the Diet to cause the election of the candidate for the throne approved by the great Cossack leader.

For, although Poland was a republic, her elected president bore the royal title of king. For the sake of the new king, from whom he expected a more peaceful and just rule, Hmielnitski stayed the fire. With pomp and triumph he returned to Kiev, where embassies from the Sultan, the Tsar, and the Hospodar of Moldavia awaited him.

War broke out again in 1649, when Poland refused to accept Hmielnitski's conditions of peace, viz. that the number of "registered" Cossacks should be increased to forty thousand and that certain Voyevodstovs should be given to his warriors; that all Jews and Jesuits should leave the Ukraina; that the Metropolitan of Kiev should have a seat in the Senate; and that official positions in the new provinces should be held only by members of the Russian Church. These conditions were objected to, not only by the Poles but also by those Cossacks who were not to be included in the forty thousand, as they resented having to return to serfdom, with the result that renewed fighting and insurrections took place.

The Cossacks were defeated through the treachery of the Tatar Khan at the battle of Beresteczko in 1651. Hmielnitski was taken captive, but escaped and offered new and more moderate conditions of peace, which, however, were also refused.

When Hmielnitski finally realised that it was useless to expect from the Poles permanent guarantees for the recognition of the rights of the Ukraina, he acclaimed the Sultan as his feudal lord. But the treacherous behaviour of the

Khan of the Crimea, who was to assist him by order of the Sultan, led the great leader in 1654 to offer his country and his people to the Tsar of Moscow, who was delighted to accept the gift, although it had very stringent conditions attached to it.

Before ultimately deciding this important question, Hmielnitski called together the Council of the Cossacks. He told them that their republic could not do without some kind of overlord (Hmielnitski himself never aimed at being an independent ruler). He therefore put before them a choice of suzerains : there were the Sultan and the Khan—both infidels, in whose realms Christians were badly treated—the King of Poland, but his comrades knew how unbearable conditions had been under his rule ; and lastly there was the Tsar of Russia, who belonged to the same faith as they did. As faith played an all-important part with the Cossacks, their choice naturally fell on the Tsar Alexei. Having thus decided whom to join, Hmielnitski read out to the assembled Council the conditions under which they might be willing to give their allegiance, and which the Tsar had declared himself ready to accept. These were : full autonomy ; the right to elect their own Ataman, who was to receive a salary of a thousand ducats and all the revenues of the town of Tchigirin ; sixty thousand Cossacks to be registered as soldiers, each one to receive three roubles a year. They also demanded the retention of their hunting, fishing, brewing, and distilling rights ; nor were any taxes whatever to be levied upon them. They were to be judged by their own judges ; and even should there be only three Cossacks in a town, one of them being a defaulter, the two others were to have jurisdiction over him. One more very important privilege the Cossacks desired to retain, viz., that of receiving envoys, for although they were prepared primarily to serve the Tsar, they wished to be free to answer the call of anyone who might require their services.

The Tsar agreed to all this on the understanding that such envoys must only come from nations friendly to Muscovy, but he drew the line at diplomatic dealings with Poland and Turkey. A few of the older Cossacks refused

to acknowledge anyone as overlord, and left the meeting while the others were signing the deed.

From this time on the Cossacks had to fight for the country of their adoption against Lithuania and Poland.

Hmielnitski, however, concluded a separate peace with the Polish Government ; it may have been that his pride was satisfied with the humiliation meted out to his former foes. Soon after, this famous patriot's career came to an end. It is said that he was poisoned by wine presented to him by a Polish visitor.

After Hmielnitski's death Poland had one more chance to regain Little Russia, as his successor volunteered to transfer his allegiance to the Polish king, on condition that all the demands formerly refused should now be conceded. By the Treaty of Hadziaz in 1658 all these were granted, and the Ukraina was accorded the same position as Lithuania ; so that what had been denied to the people when loyal, was now to be given them. But the concession came too late, for the Tsar was loth to lose the Ukraina.

Thus at this time a most important part of the Ukraina was lost to Poland ; but more blood had to be shed before the whole was incorporated into Russia. The Ukraina, apart from the lower region of the river—the Zaporogian lands, with the town of Tcherkassi as their centre,—consisted of two other districts, one on the left and one on the right side of the river. Each district, under a different Hetman, pursued a separate policy ; and thus, before Muscovy took possession of the whole of the Ukraina, there was a period in which the right side still belonged to Poland, while the left side was already joined to Russia. It was not until the Treaty of Androussovo (1667) that the whole Ukraina was definitely acquired by Russia.

Unfortunately, the successors of the Tsar Alexei did not adhere to their word, and Peter the Great especially embittered the Cossacks by his arbitrary actions. He tried in every way to weaken the Zaporogians, to whose independent attitude he objected, and twenty thousand of them lost their lives while digging canals by order of the Tsar on the marshland by the Neva, where he intended to found his new capital.

They particularly resented Peter the Great's act in presenting to the Starostas, as their personal property, the lands over which they had been ruling in virtue of election, whereby the rest of the people were deprived of the land which had belonged to all in common. This arbitrary act created a landless class, "the naked people," who now formed themselves into the "Black Council." The Tsar had only made trouble for himself by his arbitrariness, and once more the Zaporogian Cossacks rose up in revolt; this time under the Hetman Mazeppa, who made use of the popular discontent to further his own ambition, which was to become King of the Ukraina.

Mazeppa knew that it would be impossible for the Tsar to sanction such a scheme, as a kingdom of the Ukraina would have been an obstacle in the way of the Empire's expansion towards the Black Sea. The Hetman therefore turned traitor and offered his assistance to the King of Sweden, then at war with Peter I., hoping thus to gain his own ends. But he had miscalculated the number of men he could bring into the field to assist his royal ally, and at the decisive moment he had only two thousand instead of thirty thousand at his disposal.

The revolt, which ended in failure, cost the Dnieper Cossacks their last vestige of independence. Their military organisation was abolished by the Tsar; whereupon many of the Zaporogians left the Ukraina, to be recalled later on by the Empress Catherine I.; but she failed to fulfil the promises she had made to them. Some years later the Empress Elizabeth restored some of their privileges, but this was merely done to please her favourite Razoumovski, who was a Cossack by birth. Under Catherine II. the Zaporogians finally lost the last vestige of their privileges; she even abolished the Hetmanship by depriving Count Razoumovski, the favourite's brother, of this position.

After Catherine II. had annexed Poland and had conquered the Tatars of the Crimea, there seemed to be no place for those who were left of the Zaporogian Setcha, and five thousand of these inveterate warriors migrated to Turkey, where they were lost sight of. The rest the Empress rendered innocuous by forcing them to go and settle on the Kuban and

in Siberia, where they were sent to act as a frontier guard. Thus ended in 1775 the career of the famous Brotherhood of the Knights " from beyond the rapids." Most of the ordinary agricultural Cossack population of the Ukraina also lost its liberty ; for the Empress made presents to her favourites of large tracts of land, with all the people living on them. A million and a half of the once free people of Little Russia were thus turned into serfs.

The chequered career of the historic Cossacks has such divergent sides that most people will find in it something to appeal to their personal sympathy. The communistic manner of life characteristic of the Dnieper Cossacks, their love of independence, their readiness to protect the oppressed and down-trodden, their fight for the Christian faith against the Moslem Tatars, their struggles and wars against the influence and power of the Jesuits in Poland, their defence of Greek Orthodoxy against Romanism : all these facts redeem them from the charge, not seldom made against them, of having been a mere band of organised freebooters.

It is well for the Western nations to remember that they owe a debt of gratitude to the original Cossacks who staved off the overflow of the Tatar hordes ; and if they have come to stand for all that is cruel and barbarous, it is because they bore the brunt of the Tatar barbarities. One must never forget that the Cossacks of the past fought for Christianity against the infidel, and for freedom against oppression.

CHAPTER XXIII

DON COSSACKS AND OTHERS

Much ignorance prevails with regard to those famous members of the Russian army, who to-day, as well as in days gone by, form essentially the border guard of the mighty Empire.

The first Cossacks of the Don, after whom a large district of south-eastern Russia has come to be called, were originally Cossacks from the Dnieper who in the sixteenth century had gone further east to the fertile steppes of the Don, which already belonged to Muscovy. There they encountered exactly the same economic and social conditions which, some centuries earlier, had led to the development of Cossackdom in Little Russia.

There on the Don these men carried on the traditions, organisation, and administration peculiar to Cossackdom.

Love of fighting and undaunted courage are as characteristic of these Cossacks as they were of the famous Knighthood of the Ukraina. They too hated the rich and protected the poor, and in the course of such transactions thought themselves quite justified in robbing caravans and kidnapping rich Moscow merchants; while as pirates, with their small and light boats they were a danger to shipping on the Caspian Sea. They even made raids on Persia. They willingly served the Tsars of Muscovy, to whom these regions belonged, but jealously guarded their own independence; though it was always possible for the Russian Government to come to terms with them, and the Tsars made use of them when occasion required.

The Don Cossacks were not a political organisation which aimed at upsetting the Russian Government: they were simply a people dissatisfied with the economic order of things. All they desired was to be left alone and at liberty to

make raids on their own account, but these not infrequently endangered the Empire itself.

It was one of these expeditions under the leader Yermak which resulted in the conquest of Siberia in 1570. To accomplish this, these brave Cossacks had to overcome tremendous difficulties : they found themselves outnumbered by thirty to one, but preferred rather to die for the faith and the Tsar than to return without having achieved their purpose. Yermak conquered the Sibirs and made treaties with other tribes, whom he forced to take the oath of allegiance to the Tsar and to pay tribute to Muscovy. Unfortunately, this bold leader's career came to a sudden end—he was drowned while trying to cross a swollen river ; but his work, though stopped for a time, was later carried on by others. The courage of these pioneers, their passion for adventure, and their power of enduring hardship seem almost incredible.

It was at this period that Tsar Boris Godounov deprived by ukase the hitherto more or less free peasants of their liberty of movement. They suddenly found themselves the property of the master on whose land they were living at the time of the promulgation of the order. He did this in order to win the favour of the lesser nobility, to whom labourers were a necessity. So great was this necessity that a regular mania for making serfs seems to have come over the Russian nobles. No one was safe ; even visitors were suddenly declared serfs, and travellers attacked and kidnapped. All unhappy and dissatisfied folk who could manage to do so joined the Cossacks, whose liberty and independence seemed so enviable ; and, consequently, there on the Don a replica of the old Cossack community was founded—there were even also Tatar tribes to fight against.

From this centre the Don Cossacks spread to the south and east, where they formed new colonies. Those who had settled on the Volga made raids against the neighbouring Tatar states ; but when, in 1579, they sacked an important town, the Russian Government was obliged to interfere and soldiers were sent against them. The Cossacks, warned of this danger, fled further east, where many of them settled, and again waged successful warfare against Tatars and Sibirs.

An additional inducement for penetrating still further east was given by the Government, which offered colonists free grants of land and also gave them permission to form themselves into Cossack communities. This meant freedom from taxation, besides fishing and hunting rights ; in exchange for which privileges they could be called upon at any time for the protection of the Empire.

Nearly a hundred years after Yermak's exploits it is again a Don Cossack who becomes famous—Stenka Razin, the hero of the Russian peasantry, the very embodiment of Cossack tradition. The deeds of Stenka Razin have been immortalised in song, and both "Father Don" and "Mother Volga" are made to take a personal interest in his welfare.

He started his career of rebellion in revenge for what he considered an insult, and after he had made his name as a freebooter and had come to be feared by the authorities he assumed the rôle of protector of the poor. He declared war on the Boyars, whose power he wished to break. His method of gaining recruits was very simple : he invited the soldiers of the Tsar, who had been sent to fight against him, to join him, promising them liberty and equality with the rest of his followers and a fair share of the booty. He not only attacked and robbed rich merchant ships of the Volga, but became notorious as a pirate on the Caspian Sea, and even made raids into Persia. The Shah went to fight against him in person, convinced that his august presence would instantly defeat the pirate, but fortune favoured Stenka Razin, who took the Shah's son and daughter prisoner.

He extended his rule from Astrakhan to Simbirsk ; and terrible carnage and pillage followed in his wake. After having killed off the rich, he used to give the poor a free hand in looting their former masters. His career came to an end when the untrained rabble which followed him encountered the more organised forces of the Tsar. Realising the impossibility of gaining the victory, Stenka Razin fled to the Don settlement in the hope of gaining fresh recruits from amongst the Cossacks. His efforts, however, met with no success ; he was betrayed and handed over by the Ataman to the Government. Taken as a prisoner to Moscow, he was put

to the torture; yet even in the hour of suffering his proud Cossack soul never flinched. It is reported that he encouraged his brother, who was with him, with the following words: "We have ruled, we have enjoyed life; now let us bear up under suffering." When he stepped on to the scaffold, he bowed towards the four points of the compass, saying: "Proshtchai!" which means both "Forgive" and "Farewell." Not a groan passed his lips; to the last he upheld the Cossack's point of honour, never to let the enemy see how a brave man suffers.

It is still a popular superstition that he is not really dead, but that he reappears, under other names, to deliver the peasants whenever they are oppressed.

A century later the downtrodden serfs hailed in Pougatchev, who pretended to be the Tsar Peter III., a reappearance of Stenka Razin. His success was tremendous, though short-lived; in five days one hundred thousand men flocked to his standard, and terrible acts of carnage were committed. Pougatchev, like his predecessor, ended his life on the scaffold in Moscow.

Descendants though they be of rebels and fugitives from authority, the Cossacks have become reliable instruments for the purpose of warfare. To-day they are known as irregular cavalry and infantry, and form an integral part of the Russian military organisation. They are divided into ten "Voiskos" or armies, which derive their names from the districts in which they live: Don, Kuban, Terak, Astrakhan, Ural, Orenburg, Siberia, Semiryschensk, Usuri, Amur.

The Amur Cossacks, however, have no blood relationship with those of Europe. They are the creation of a far-seeing Governor of Siberia, who needed Russian settlers for the frontier regions. To provide a population for this strategically important borderland he decided to send there thousands of convicts, who were to be given all the rights, privileges, and conditions of Cossack communities. At the moment of embarkation he told these men of the happy future he had in store for them; but they unanimously protested that they could not possibly live without wives. The Governor saw the reasonableness of this, and had the female convicts brought

out on show, telling every man to pick out a companion, which was done. On arrival at their place of destination the Archimandrite wisely recognised these marriages as valid, even without any further ceremony.

The central administration of all these ten armies, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of War, is vested in a special board composed of representatives of each Voisko, who act in an advisory capacity with regard to all new laws affecting the Cossack population. But, in spite of this close link with the War Office, the Cossacks have retained their own peculiar organisations, social as well as political, which conform to the original model of their prototypes of the Ukraina.

The old communistic ideal is still in vogue, and the lands around each of the Stanitsas into which the Voiskos are divided, as well as all fisheries, belong to the community. The land is held in common by all the members of the group, while strangers who wish to live amongst them have to pay rent.

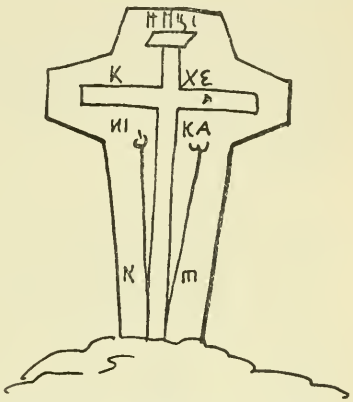
Every Stanitsa is ruled over by a Stanitsa Ataman, but important resolutions have to be discussed in a public assembly by all those who have the vote. The general administration of each Voisko is quite distinct, and frequently varies somewhat from that of the others.

In time of peace the Cossacks, who form a population of two and a half millions, carry on every kind of occupation which permits of a free, out-of-door existence. These vary according to climatic conditions and geographical position. To agriculture, which forms the basis of their means of livelihood, they add, according to climate and geographical conditions, cattle and horse breeding, vine and bee culture, fishing and hunting ; but the exploiting of the mineral wealth of their districts the Cossacks rent out to strangers, who also own most of the factories.

In return for special privileges—of which the most important are free grants of land, exemption from Imperial taxation, the right of hunting, of distilling spirits, and of brewing beer —the whole male population of the Stanitsas is bound to give military service. From his eighteenth to his thirty-eighth

year every Cossack may be called upon at any time to take part in war. In times of peace, military service is divided into three stages : the first three years in the preliminary division, the next twelve in active service, and the last five in the reserve. Members of cavalry regiments must provide their own horses and kit—with the exception of arms, which are supplied by the Imperial Government.

The history of the Cossacks has led to many speculations, and it is not easy to appreciate the whole range of their influence and importance in the past. Coming into existence as the result of the distracted conditions of southern Russia, they were reared and fostered in periods of lawlessness and internecine warfare, and even to-day political and military unrest is for them a congenial atmosphere. But no longer do they attack their neighbours on their own initiative, instead, they have become part of a complex machinery. They have been used by the Government in every political disturbance, whether Pogrom or mere student riot, and their "nagaikas" or whips have left their mark on many an innocent man.



Cross on the Grave of Cossack Leader.

That the Government uses the Cossacks under these conditions by preference is due to the fact that they, as strangers from a distance and accustomed to lifelong military discipline, have no such compunction as the ordinary soldier, who is a conscript and therefore a man of the people and naturally averse from shooting down his own kith and kin.

In the present war Cossacks from even the most Eastern confines of the Empire are taking a valiant part. They are upholding their reputation for bravery, and we trust that they will be true to the best, and only the best, traditions of Cossackdom.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BALTIC PROVINCES OF RUSSIA

To the student of history it is evident that with reference to the ethics of conquest no country has any right to throw stones at another. There is a uniformity in the manner in which conquered nations have been treated which borders on monotony.

The history of the Baltic provinces of Russia illustrates this statement: they have been under Polish and Swedish and are now under Russian rule.

There are many points of similarity in experience and conditions between this country and Ireland, for here, as there, the indigenous population and the nobility and middle class belong to a different race. The former consists of Esthonians, members of the Finnish race, and the Letts, who, with the Lithuanians, form a separate branch of the Indo-Germanic stock; while the latter are of German origin.

In 1160, enterprising merchants from Lübeck, who had settled in Wisby on the island of Gothland, began to trade with the Livonians on the Düna. Some time later a courageous and daring monk from the Augustine monastery at Bremen ventured to accompany the merchants on their annual expedition to the wild heathen on the distant shores of the Baltic. This first missionary to the Livonians possessed all the qualities of a pioneer coloniser, and wielded the sword as effectively as the Word.

There exists an ancient chronicle in which the very drastic Christianisation of this country is minutely described, and which resembles a war report rather than a missionary report. Still, this warrior monk succeeded in establishing a certain amount of jurisdiction over the natives. He did not long

remain alone, for, reassured by his successful attempts to civilise the inhabitants, German settlers followed. Many of them came from Friesland, Westphalia, Holstein, etc.—in fact, from "Lower Saxony." To the inhabitants of the Baltic provinces these intruders were all "Saxon" or "Saksads."

Soon the enterprising merchants and priests were joined by religious adventurers. It was the period of the Crusades, and Christian knights whose energies demanded an outlet other than in Palestine found it in these countries. In 1202 the order of the "Sword Bearers" was established, which thirty-six years later united with the order of the powerful "Teutonic Knights," who, having been expelled from Palestine by the Saracens, had first settled in Venice, then in Marienburg, from whence they conquered the heathen Prussians.

It was not until 1300 that the three districts, Courland, Livonia, and Esthonia, were completely conquered; nor was this accomplished without desperate resistance on the one side and relentless severity on the other. In this manner the first German "overseas colony" was founded—overseas in the sense that the immigrants, whether traders, priests, or knights, reached the shores of the Baltic by ship.

The colonisation of these provinces lacked, however, an essential element for a healthy normal development, *i.e.* peasants, for no agriculturists from Germany had ventured so far east. No vital fusion was therefore possible between the conquering and the conquered race. There was no peasant class to act as medium for the Germanisation of the nation.

In one respect the knights and their descendants, the Baltic nobles, have acted differently from most conquerors: they not only did not impose their language upon the subject races, but actually prevented them from learning German. The reason for this impolitic action was the fear lest the people of the land might aim at equality.

The people were left in full possession of their liberty and property so long as they voluntarily submitted to the merchants and knights. On the other hand, the natives were deprived of their personal liberty and became "glebæ ad-

scriptæ," *i.e.* "tied to the land," if they persisted in resistance or made common cause with the heathen Lithuanians. Some of the Livonian chiefs were recognised as nobles, the family of the Von Lieven being among their descendants.

The conquerors brought civilisation with them; they taught these forest-dwellers agriculture and how to build fortresses and cities. The newly conquered lands were divided between the order, the Archbishop of Riga, and the town of that name founded in 1201, and which by 1260 was important enough to join the Hanseatic League. Although the knights were celibates, they increased in numbers and influence, as their married relations followed in their wake, thereby creating a Saxon aristocracy.

The great political events of Germany found their echo in this distant country, and, while towns and knights upheld the Guelfs, the bishops sided with the Popes; yet when external foes, whether Lithuanian or Russian, Danish or Swedish, had to be resisted, these internal differences were put aside and a united front shown to the enemy.

The Baltic provinces, although separated from Germany by alien nations, were considered as part of the Holy Roman Empire, and in 1525 the Grand Master of the order, Walter von Plettenberg, was confirmed in his dignity as a prince of the Empire. At the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 his representatives ranked next to the Archbishops of Riga and Bremen.

In the sixteenth century the Germanic element of the provinces consisted of nobles, clerics, merchants, and artisans, who already, during the lifetime of Martin Luther, accepted the principles of the Reformation. As all its members became Protestants, the "Order of the Sword Bearers" was dissolved, its members becoming lords of the manor.

By order of the Civic Council of Riga, and with the sanction of the Grand Master, the town clerk wrote to Martin Luther asking him to encourage and further the spread of evangelical teaching in the Baltic provinces. The great Reformer replied in an autograph letter which is still in existence, and which was addressed "To the Elect and Beloved Friends of God, to all Christians in Righe, Revell, Tarbethe (Riga, Reval, Dorpat) in Lifland."

With the introduction of Protestantism all was done to raise the intellectual level of the Esthonians and Letts, but the policy of keeping the people from learning German was maintained until about the middle of the nineteenth century. This was a cruel wrong, for the clever and gifted people thirsted for that knowledge which only higher education could supply and for which the knowledge of German was imperative. Still, the literary achievements of Germany were offered them through translations, and thus many became intellectually Germanised.

But just at a time when progress and civilisation had taken a leap forward a terrible calamity befell the Baltic provinces. In 1558 they were invaded by an army of sixty thousand Russians and Tatars, with such disastrous results that by the end of the sixteenth century hardly one-quarter of the population was left in Livonia. At the same time Poles and Swedes also invaded the unhappy country, which was under no central authority and therefore unable to make a successful stand against the enemy.

In their need and despair the sorely pressed cities and nobles sent an appeal for help and protection to the Emperor Ferdinand I. at Vienna, but his only action was to send a note of warning to the Tsar, who naturally treated it with contempt. It was when they realised their utter helplessness, and the futility of expecting any assistance from the German Empire, that Esthonia joined Denmark, while Livonia and Courland submitted to Poland. By a solemn decree, the "Privilegium Sigismundi," the King of Poland guaranteed to these lands in 1561 all their existing laws and privileges, local autonomy, the retention of the German language and of their Protestant faith. It is quite pathetic to read in paragraph 11 of the document in which Livonia and Courland submitted to the King their conditions for surrender, the request that he should make their apologies to the Emperor "that having been so utterly forsaken by the Empire, they had been forced to seek protection from Poland."

This new rule, however, did not bring prosperity: the guarantees sworn to were not kept, and after the death of this king a period of violence and oppression followed. It

was unfortunate for Livonia that in her union with Poland she had been united to Lithuania, for with the incorporation of this principality into the Polish republic new troubles arose. The Protestant Livonia had to suffer from the national and religious animosity of the Polish Diet. To what extent they were oppressed can be judged from the fact that a letter of consolation was written to them by the wise and generous king, Stefan Bathory, but even he was not able to follow the dictates of his own conscience or to resist the influence of the Jesuits and of the Polish ecclesiastical magnates.

Conditions grew rapidly worse ; guarantees were ignored, and every one of Livonia's cherished rights was attacked. Polish influence also had a bad effect on the Baltic aristocracy, for serfdom with all its horrors was now introduced.

Considering the circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that the Livonian Estates accepted the invitation of the Swedish Chancellor to join his country, which at that time was at war with Poland. They met in conference, and on 28th May 1601 the union with Sweden was ratified in Stockholm. The conditions were practically the same as those which had been signed fifty years previously by the Polish king ; but it was not until three years later, under King Gustavus Adolphus, that Sweden came into actual possession of Livonia.

At the start Swedish rule was just, though severe ; good laws were promulgated, agriculture and education fostered, and the religious and ecclesiastical life of the nation was able to develop unhindered. Unfortunately, later on, under Charles X., other methods were adopted, and under Charles XI. the constitution even was altered, and the same king confiscated one-sixth of all properties, turning them into Swedish Crown lands.

At the dawn of the eighteenth century Russia waged war against Sweden. Peter the Great needed seaports, and also desired a hinterland for his new capital. The "Northern War," 1700–1721, ended with the Peace of Nystad, 1721, Livonia and Esthonia passing from Swedish into Russian possession. Peter I. promised for himself and all his heirs to respect and uphold all the privileges and institutions of the newly acquired provinces ; in fact, it amounted to a

re-establishment of all their lost rights. Paragraphs 9 and 10 of the peace contract specify these economic, social, and political rights. Full religious liberty was guaranteed ; but while the Protestant religion was recognised as the established creed of these lands, it was stipulated that the Greek Orthodox Church should have equally free scope. Courland still retained a certain independence as a Polish vassal state, until in 1795 it was sold by the last Duke for several million roubles to the Empress Catherine.

After the union with Russia a period of peace and prosperity followed, bringing with it progress in every sphere of life ; only the serfs were still treated as mere chattels. To quote an extract from the diary of a nobleman on the occasion of his daughter's marriage : " I also give to my beloved daughter, as servant, a young man called Hindrick. I give him to her as a present, and she is free to do with him as she likes : to keep him, to give him away, or to sell him."

Although Peter the Great had pledged all his successors to keep their rights and privileges, the nobility and the cities of the provinces humbly petitioned each new ruler graciously to confirm these promises. Catherine II., who objected to the separatist tendencies of these provinces, made various changes and infringed some of their privileges, which, however, were made good by her son the Emperor Paul I. On the other hand, she utilised the good schools of Riga, etc., to supply teachers for Russian schools.

During the reign of Alexander I. (1801–1825) the Baltic provinces enjoyed an uninterrupted period of quiet and progress. It was then that the nobles decided to abolish serfdom as it existed in its most absolute form. Thus forty-five years before Alexander II. issued the manifesto by which Russia's serfs were liberated, this policy of progress and humanity had been voluntarily adopted by the owners of Esthonian and Lettish serfs. They acted judiciously in not giving this freedom too suddenly ; but as the people learned to make use of their new liberty, more and more privileges were granted them, so that by 1862 there was nothing to hinder the indigenous population from becoming independent farmers, or even landowners.

The wise and generous monarch realised that to have a satisfied, happy country as a buffer state between Germany and Russia would be an asset to his Empire. He fulfilled the promise of Peter I. to found a university in Dorpat "for the welfare of the Russian Empire in general, and for the provinces of Livonia, Esthonia, and Courland in particular." So terrible had been the ravages of the Northern War, that it was nearly a century before the nobility could find the means to endow this university. The Tsar stood in very personal and direct relations to the first Chancellor and Rector of the new university, whose beneficent influence on the Emperor showed itself in many ways.

Kant—whose first issues of his *Critique of Pure Reason* had been printed in Riga—and Goethe were at that time the great leaders of German thought; it was their advice which the Tsar followed in the nomination of professors, all of whom were Germans. In the year 1827 a college for the training of professors was established in Dorpat, to which the best students from Russian universities were sent to continue their studies, Pirogov, the famous surgeon and founder of the Russian Medical Society, being one of them.

Gradually, however, the friendly and sympathetic interest of the Imperial Government towards Dorpat changed. The reactionary tendencies which started with the reign of the Tsar Nicholas I. were antagonistic to the more liberal tendencies of that university. "Western poison," as he called it, "was to be rendered harmless." The Emperor's prejudice against academical autonomy increased still more after the success of the French Revolution of July 1830, and also after the first Polish insurrection; and although the loyalty of the Baltic students towards Tsar and Empire was never questioned, their liberties were more and more curtailed. Nicholas I. saw the only safeguard and salvation for his dominion in the relentless enforcing of the motto, "One faith, one law, one language." No diversity was to be countenanced.

In 1835, Kraftstroem, a general who during the Napoleonic wars had risen from the ranks, was appointed Curator of Dorpat. He had no understanding whatever of the intellectual needs of the students, but issued strict regulations as

to the length of their hair and the cut of their uniforms, etc. At his first visit to the university library he was horrified to see books of various dimensions on the same shelf, and demanded an immediate rearrangement according to size.

He was convinced that academic liberty would lead to revolutionary activity, and put both " town and gown " under a kind of martial law. Never more than four students might be seen together in the streets, and not even the professors were exempt from control ; also certain subjects, such as " European laws," were forbidden to be taught. In spite of all this strict discipline, the Emperor issued still more stringent regulations : he calculated that three hundred students per year would yield a sufficient body of officials, judges, and teachers ; therefore more than this number of students were not to be admitted.

The university had attained a high reputation and had played an important part in the intellectual, juridical, and even military life of the Empire. But it is especially scientists and professors whom Dorpat has produced—such as Carl Ernst von Baer the distinguished biologist, the astronomer W. Struve, von Krusenstjern the explorer, and others. From this new seat of culture, Western influences, education, and civilisation have radiated which have proved a blessing to the whole Empire. Revolutionary and political agitation did not find congenial soil amongst her students as it did in the Russian universities, and incorruptible judges, conscientious schoolmasters, and famous medical men have come forth from this Germanic centre of learning.

Russification of the university was, however, introduced ; her autonomy was abrogated, and lectures had to be delivered in Russian. This was due to the influence of the Slavophiles, the nationalist party in Russia, which was opposed to the more advanced Western civilisation of the Baltic provinces. In spite of his personal friendliness to the inhabitants of these provinces, the Emperor Alexander II. was not strong enough to resist his reactionary advisers, especially Pobyedonostsev, the lay head of the Holy Synod. In 1882 the character of the university had completely changed, and in 1893 even the name Dorpat was altered to that of Yuryev—

after a small Russian fort built in 1030 in that neighbourhood by Yaroslav, the great Prince of Kiev.

This Russification attacked every sphere of education: the university lost its autonomy; the old Foundation schools were deprived of their privileges and endowments; the elementary schools were withdrawn from the control of the nobles and clergy. All these institutions were handed over to Russian officials, who were often quite uneducated, and unfortunately not infrequently drawn from the most undesirable elements of Russian society. If the general standard of civilisation, economic as well as intellectual, had been on a higher level in Russia than in the three sister provinces, such uniformity might have been justifiable; but the Baltic provinces had enjoyed for centuries educational advantages denied to the inhabitants of the Empire into which they had been incorporated by Peter the Great.

Ever since 1840 there had also been deliberate attempts made to proselytise the Protestant population, and by every means, fair or foul, converts were brought in to the Greek Church. The Baltic provinces had been suffering from famine, and the Russian missionaries promised to the needy people free corn and free land if they would join the Greek Orthodox Church. In one place near Dorpat the gullible people were told that there were only two small barrels of holy oil left, and that they must therefore hasten to be anointed or their chance of receiving land would be lost and they would be pressed into the army. Ecstatic prophets also arose who proclaimed the advent of a deliverer under Michael the Prince, and that then all the troubles of the people would be over. It seems hardly credible, but at that time about one hundred and sixty thousand Letts and Esthonians were thus "converted" to the Russian faith. When, however, these poor dupes demanded the fulfilment of the promises of land, etc., the emissaries of the Russian Church denied ever having made any such promise, or else implied that the nobles and Protestant clergy were preventing their fulfilment.

One sad result of these false allegations was the artificial inflaming of hatred in the hearts of the Esthonians and Letts against the upper classes.

When reaction set in, many of these converts desired to return to the Church of their fathers, but then it was too late. They were informed that according to law it was impossible to leave the State Church, and that, once having become members of the Russian Church, they and their descendants would have to belong to it for ever. Nevertheless, many of these converts attended their former Church, but severe punishments were prescribed for those clergy who dared to administer the Sacrament to the ex-members of their flock.

Much mental and moral suffering ensued, and finally Alexander II. sent the highly honoured and respected General Bobrinski to examine into and investigate the ecclesiastic conditions of the Baltic provinces. This Russian official stigmatised the action of the State Church as "an official deception, bringing shame upon Russia and upon the Greek Orthodox Church." Fortunately the humane Tsar did *not* demand the enforcement of the law, but even issued secret orders by which the Baltic people obtained some respite, and marriages between the converts and Protestants were solemnised in the Evangelical churches, even their children being baptised into that faith.

Some years later, when, under the rule of Alexander III., Pobyedonostsev gained increased power, the Lutheran pastors who had solemnised these rites or had administered the Sacraments in all good faith were suspended from their duties. In consequence, over a hundred lawsuits were instituted, some of which ended in temporary suspension from office of many of the accused, and in some cases they were even condemned to imprisonment.

The conditions thus created through the rigorous enforcement of the Russian law had very serious moral results : by the action of their parents the younger generation had been excluded from the Evangelical Church ; as few of them, however, wished to be members of the Greek Orthodox Church, the majority of the people lost all touch with religion.

At this time the Russian Government found an ally in its campaign against the Baltic provinces in a new national party which had sprung up—that of the "Young Esthonians

and Young Letts," who aimed at emancipation from the tutelage and rule of the Germanic element. To begin with there were only a few men who, as leaders of this movement, were able to wield that power and thus to enjoy the importance which had hitherto been denied them by the upper classes. Later on this movement gained more widespread influence through the press, and it was at this point that the Russian Government stepped in, taking up the case of the apparently downtrodden inhabitants, who, however, soon discovered that they had been used merely as pawns in the game of the Government. Their ambition to see Esthonian and Lettish replace German as the leading languages was not fulfilled ; all these were abolished in legislation and schools in favour of Russian, and were not reintroduced until after the Revolution of 1905.

The former educational disabilities of the indigenous population of these provinces had been removed since 1850 ; and as the universities and technical schools, etc., not only of the Baltic towns but of the Russian Empire, stood open to them, a middle class other than German gradually developed.

In looking back over the history of these provinces it cannot be denied that the Germanic element, especially as represented by the barons, has by its haughty exclusiveness alienated the native population.

This exaggerated pride of race, while developing strong personality and will power, has at the same time caused much suffering to the classes which were considered inferior. This feeling of superiority, of belonging to a ruling race, spread even to the artisans and working people of German extraction, who in their turn came to look down upon the Letts and Esthonians.

As the whole trend of the educated classes was conservative, the revolutionary ideals and aspirations prevalent in Russia found but little response amongst the Germanic element of the provinces. When by the manifesto of October 1905 the constitution was granted to the Empire, the majority of the Baltic nobility and gentry joined the party of the " Octobrists," which took its stand solely on the promises

of the manifesto. This party was less conservative than the "Nationalist," but also much less liberal than the "Constitutional Democrats," and was divided by a great gulf from the Radicals, who had many adherents from among the Letts and Esthonians. Therefore, when the terrible rising broke out, it was directed quite as much against the Russian Government as against the landed gentry.

The estrangement between the indigenous population and the upper classes had disastrous results. The revolution in Russia gave the signal for a similar in these Baltic provinces; the people seemed swept off their feet, and in a kind of frenzy destroyed human and animal life. A Revolutionary Committee was organised which ruled for a short period. It commandeered money, vehicles, etc., from the landed gentry, some of whom acknowledged this impromptu authority and were spared, whilst others, in spite of non-resistance, were killed—not for any wrong they had done personally, but for the sins of their fathers, the owners of the serfs whose descendants now felt that *their* time had come.

Owing to this fury of destruction thousands of families of all classes became destitute: over two hundred castles and manor-houses were burnt down, and from one castle alone fourteen burning country-houses were counted.

At this very time the economic conditions of the Baltic peasantry were far better than in most other countries—especially Russia. Half of the whole area of the provinces belonged to the peasants as freehold: still, it was only to be expected that the promises made by agitators of a more prosperous future after the expulsion of the barons should have been believed by the peasants and labourers. But what was really astonishing was the madness of destruction and the intense hatred indulged in. One party of ladies and gentlemen was kept five days as prisoners, and during these days was led out ten times to be shot, but rumours that the Russian soldiers were coming prevented the execution on each occasion.

All that the landed gentry, the clergy, and the professional classes had done for the social and educational welfare of the people by means of hospitals and schools, in the care of the

poor, the widow and the orphan, seemed forgotten. It is permissible to see herein a kind of historical retribution ; for if the German element had been less exclusive, and less afraid of the people's claim for social equality, there would have been a united and homogeneous population to present a solid front to the advance of Russification in its destructive form, and to the revolutionary agitator.

The Russian Government, occupied with repressing the revolution in the Empire, could not effectively protect the minority in the Baltic provinces. Punitive expeditions were sent later on, but the terrible measures used by the military authorities to put down the revolution in these provinces have opened up a gulf which will perhaps never be bridged over ; the bitterness in the hearts of all those who have suffered on both sides will rankle for generations.

Since the revolution the national consciousness of the indigenous population has become very pronounced, and whereas, not so very many years ago, well-educated Letts or Esthonians called themselves "Balten," they to-day proudly admit their own nationality.

Whatever the sins and faults of these descendants of Saxon conquerors and colonists, it remains an indisputable fact that the Baltic provinces have played an important part in the history of Eastern Europe, and that they have served as a link between West and East. Three great Powers, Poland, Sweden, and Russia, have at different times fought for their possession, realising what an important asset they represented, not only economically but geographically, and therefore politically.

The high state of civilisation, however, which the provinces enjoy is due to the Germanic element, which has proved itself to be possessed of constructive virility and of a marvellous capacity for retaining its own peculiar characteristics. It is an interesting phenomenon that the nobility managed to eliminate absolutely the Polish and Lithuanian families which had, during two generations, settled in the provinces, while the Swedish nobility and citizens became absorbed into the Germanic element. Thanks to this consciousness of forming a political unit by themselves, these

provinces have never been absorbed by the different States to which they at one time or another have belonged.

As to the general attitude of the upper classes of the Baltic provinces towards the Russian Empire—they feel themselves to be first Lieflanders, Esthlanders, or Courlanders, and only then Russians. We find a parallel case in the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh, who are British but not English. There are, however, many members of Baltic families who have become thoroughly Russianised and who have been so for generations, and it is often only by their typically Baltic names that their origin can be traced. Even if on the whole there has not been any special love for Russia, there has always been loyalty to the person of the Tsars, in whose entourage great numbers of the Baltic nobility have filled important posts: to come across Lord Chamberlains, Masters of the Ceremonies, Adjutants, bearing German names is a common occurrence. Also they have ably represented the Russian Empire in the diplomatic and consular services. In the annals of Russian wars, too, many Baltic names figure—to mention only Prince Barclay de Tolly, a Livonian, the commander-in-chief of the Russian forces in the Napoleonic wars; General von Todleben, the gallant defender of Sevastopol. In this war large numbers of Baltic men are wholeheartedly doing their duty to Tsar and Empire both on sea and on land.

Even during periods of acute oppression the Baltic gentry have never desired a change of ruler, and at the time of the revolution in 1905, some of their leaders expressed it publicly that their looks were altogether turned eastward. Their grievances have always been the infringement of guaranteed laws and privileges and the arbitrary methods by which Russification was introduced and carried out. They bitterly resent the attempts of the Government to treat the Baltic provinces as on a par with the fifty odd provinces of the Empire, which latter are districts for purely administrative purposes. But in spite of the fact that they owe their intellectual and spiritual life to Germany, they have not desired a political union with that country, nor does their attitude of grateful recognition of all they owe to

German civilisation interfere with their loyalty to the Russian throne ; and yet it is just this twofold loyalty which has been made a reproach to them—Pan-slavistic Russians call them "Germans," while Letts and Esthonians blame them for their staunch support of the Russian Emperor.

It must, however, be borne in mind that Courland is next-door neighbour to Prussia, and that in Baltic seaports large numbers of naturalised Germans live, to whom the preceding statement as to loyalty does not necessarily apply. The war with Germany is a severe test not only to the Baltic peoples but also for the Russian Government: there is cause for fear that having sown the wind during the last sixty years, it may now reap the whirlwind.

View of the Kremlin and the Foundling House.

From a Drawing A.D. 1825.

CHAPTER XXV

POLAND

Anyone who has not made a special study of the history of Poland must find it somewhat bewildering, so many conflicting currents have played a part in whirling her along the stream of time.

Very little is known about the early history of Poland, but by the time she entered the arena of European history (900 A.D.) the differentiation of the Slavonic races had been accomplished. Five of the tribes that inhabited the lands east of Saxony and of Prussia were then under the rule of a sixth—the Polyans, or "People of the Plain." This tribe was either more virile than the others or else was ruled by specially energetic princes who were able to obtain supremacy for the Polyans and to impose their name on the new State.

The first distinct personality which stands out among the rulers of Poland is Mieszko, Prince of Kuyavia (930–992), of the dynasty of the Piasts, which also supplied rulers to Masovia and to Silesia. In order to save Poland from a German invasion he accepted Christianity in 966, thereby preventing the Germans from entering his country on the plea of Christianising it.

Already before this king's conversion Christianity had been spreading in a healthy, natural way. Disciples of Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of the Slavs, had introduced it among their blood relations, the Poles ; thus the first Polish Christians were members of the Eastern Church. The king, however, desirous of conciliating his powerful German neighbours, joined the Western Church for political reasons.

His action was destined to have far-reaching results, both good and evil : good, because her allegiance to the Church of

Rome drew Poland into the Occidental sphere of culture, and this again led to her being vitally influenced by the events which took place in Western Europe; evil, because the difference in creed between the Slavs of this country and those of other lands caused much suffering and even bloodshed later on.

Mieszko was followed by Boleslav (992–1025), who was the first to assume the royal title and to be crowned King of Poland. Information as to the internal condition of the country during this period is scanty; but it is safe to assume that Poland was ruled by an autocratic king, and that the nobility was divided into two sets—the Vladykas, who were descendants of the chiefs of conquered tribes, and the Szlachta. Foreign knights also seem to have taken service under King Boleslav. The chief ambition of the earlier kings of the dynasty was to unite all the Western Slavs into one great kingdom, and to gain support and influence by intermarriage with the ruling houses of the powerful neighbouring States—whether Russian, German, or Austrian. Thus at one time the daughter of Yaroslav of Kiev was Queen of Poland.

King Boleslav "the Rash" was a fair specimen of his time and of his people, who are described as being "heroic, rash, anarchical, wanting in political tact and in the spirit of organisation." They lacked the power of subordination, of co-ordination, and of co-operation; their ideal being unlimited liberty.

The various princes of the other Polish principalities recognised in 1122 Boleslav, "Crooked Mouth," as their king. He instituted the first crusade against the heathen Pomeranians, in the hope of gaining at the same time possession of the estuary of the Vistula. In this, however, he did not succeed, and the work of converting the Pomeranians was carried on by the Bishop of Bamberg. German influence began to penetrate also in Poland, and the Poles quickly assimilated German customs and readily responded to the intellectual and spiritual influence emanating from the new monastic centres which sprang up all over the country.

Although many Polish students went to Paris to study, life in Poland remained as simple and as truly Slavonic as

ever—in fact, very much as it was in Kievite Russia. Here, as there, the king was surrounded by his friends, or Drujina, with whom he feasted or went into battle, as occasion demanded. The peasants were still free men, although the nobles had made several attempts to enslave them; but already at that period a class of serfs had begun to develop as the lowest stratum of society: most likely its numbers were recruited from amongst the captives of war.

As the result of a great rising in 1171 the youngest brother of the late king was placed on the throne. This ruler, Casimir II., in order to become independent of the magnates to whom he owed his power, conferred special privileges on the clergy, thus raising them into another Estate. In 1180 the first Diet was assembled, and the special privileges granted to both the nobility and the clergy during that session resulted at a later period in the forging of a chain by which the kings were rendered helpless.

While the two privileged Estates grew in power, the people of the land, who had to pay the taxes, were more and more oppressed until their economic condition became desperate. The monasteries, realising the need for a more independent and consequently more productive peasantry, introduced German colonisation on Church lands—a reform which had far-reaching consequences during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Although in the latter century the number of these villages had risen to one hundred and forty-nine, the agricultural population was still insufficient, and Polish peasants were granted land according to "German law," by which their economic condition was greatly improved.

The population was mostly agricultural, but in the thirteenth century cities were founded and such important towns as Gnesen the capital, Posen, Cracow, Kalish, and later on Lublin, developed. Into these towns German organisation and methods of administering law and order were introduced; but although the Teutonic language and civilisation exercised considerable influence, the Germans themselves were far from popular.

At this period, in Poland as in Russia, it was the custom when a ruler died for his sons to divide the inheritance among

themselves; in Russia, whoever bore rule in Kiev had supremacy over the others; in Poland, whoever ruled over Cracow. The kingdom had gradually come to consist of a number of principalities; the most important of these were Silesia, Masovia, Kuyavia, Pomerania, and Great and Little Poland. These principalities, however, were in a perpetual state of rivalry and strife, and every time a throne became vacant there was an outburst of quarrelling and revolt. The princes never united except to resist a common foe.

That Poland kept her independence under these circumstances was due, not to any effort on the part of her princes, but merely to the unsatisfactory internal conditions of those nations which surrounded her.

The Mongol hordes which had ruined Russia also poured into Poland; they devastated the country and laid low the cities of Cracow, Breslau, Sandomir, etc. This calamity united her princes, who bonded together to resist the Mongols, with whom they contested the ground inch by inch. At the battle of Lignitz in 1241 the Tatars were beaten and the great wave of the threatening invasion exhausted itself, and Poland, by thus acting as breakwater, saved the rest of Europe.

She emerged from this awful struggle wounded and bleeding, but still in possession of life and independence; whereas Kievite Russia became a vassal State of the Khan.

The Tatar hordes continued for many years to make annual raids on Poland. It is recorded that during one of these raids which lasted only a fortnight fifty thousand people were taken into captivity to Turkey and Asia Minor, where flourishing markets for European slaves were regularly held. Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that Poland was reduced to a state of economic ruin, that a new beginning had to be made, and that all her institutions had practically to be built up again.

The moral effect of these terrible years was no less disastrous. The whole nation was exhausted; the people lost all love for labour and many fled into the monasteries, which consequently flourished; the saints lived a life of indolence behind convent walls; while the sinners who remained in the world found relief from the strain of their ghastly experiences

in giving themselves up to enjoyment. The common people became careless and coarse; the nobility frivolous, extravagant, and ignorant.

In the fourteenth century, under King Vladislav Lieczek, Poland seems to have been given a new lease of life, politically as well as nationally. He fought persistently and successfully against the Germans, and from this time onwards the municipal registers were no longer written in the German language. He married his son to the daughter of Gedemin, Prince of Lithuania, and thus prepared the way for a future alliance between the two countries. He also moved his capital from Gnesen to Cracow, where he was crowned King of Poland in 1319. With the exception of Masovia and a part of Kuyavia, he united all Poland, both Great and Little, under one sceptre, and in 1331 the first "General Diet," representing all the various parts of the new kingdom, was held.

This successful ruler was followed by his son, Casimir III. (1333–1370), who had spent the greater part of his life at the Court of his brother-in-law the King of Hungary. Casimir the Great, as he was called later on, was the first ruler to come to the throne without having to fight for it. He tried to regulate the vexed question of succession once for all, but, unwittingly, only paved the way for future trouble, *i.e.* for disastrous rule by elected kings. During his reign Poland prospered in every way. He did his utmost to consolidate the kingdom, to which he added Galicia. This principality had since the tenth century formed part of the great principality of Kiev, and had been ruled over by Kievite princes. It was known as "Tchervonnaya Rus," or "Golden Russia," and in the twelfth century had become an independent principality with Halitch on the Dniester as its capital. But at a later date her prince owed allegiance to the Prince of Suzdal, who had then assumed pre-eminence over the other Russian principalities. One of these princes, however, Roman of Volhynia (1188–1255), not only refused to acknowledge his cousin of Suzdal as overlord, but himself assumed the title of "Lord of All the Russias."

When the Mongol hordes were devastating Russia it seemed possible at one time that Danielo, the brave son of Roman,

would be able to deliver his people out of the hands of the terrible Tatar ; but in the end he too was obliged to submit to the Khan in order to save his country from devastation.

Galicia was threatened on every side by Hungarian Mongols and Lithuanians ; but when political necessity forced the princes of Galicia to seek a *rapprochement* in order to escape annexation, they sought it with Poland. The Poles at least were of the same blood, spoke the same language, and had the same customs. In 1325 the union was concluded under Casimir, but, in order to arrive at a settlement which would satisfy the other claimants, Hungary and Lithuania, he had to grant the supreme suzerainty over Galicia to Hungary and cede part of Volhynia and all Podolia to Lithuania ; yet Polish influence became paramount, and Poland virtually obtained possession of the whole length of the Vistula. Many Poles colonised Galicia, which became a stronghold for the king, who ruled over the united kingdom with firmness, foresight, and wisdom.

Casimir the Great was succeeded by his nephew, Louis, King of Hungary, who, after his coronation in Cracow, speedily returned to his own country, entrusting the regency of the kingdom of Poland to his mother Elizabeth, under whose rule disorder soon became rife. Conscious of her incapacity, the Queen quitted the country, but was forced by her son to return. After her death a triumvirate, under the presidency of the Bishop of Cracow, ruled for a time ; but the disorder only increased, and a rebellion broke out, during which King Louis died.

The Estates refused to have another Hungarian absentee as king, but declared their willingness to recognise as their ruler any one of the daughters of the late king who would agree to take up her residence in Poland. The choice fell upon Hedwig, a girl aged thirteen. To begin with, the Queen-mother refused to let her go on account of her youth ; but when the Poles threatened to withdraw their offer, consent was given and Hedwig crowned " King " of Poland in 1384. The next question to be settled was the marriage of the young ruler, as Wilhelm of Austria, to whom she was betrothed, was not acceptable to the Poles. Policy, and not sentiment,

prevailed, and she was married to Yagiello, the Grand Duke of Lithuania.

The Lithuanians, whose territory occupied the plains, forests, and lakes between the Baltic and the lower course of the Dvina and the estuary of the Vistula, had in the course of centuries developed into a nation by fusion with the neighbouring tribes, the Semgals and Jmuds, whose neighbours on the other side were the Prussians and the Letts. In early times the principality, or Grand Duchy, had come into contact with Poland and Russia, even to the extent of paying tribute to the Prince of Polotsk. But in the thirteenth century, when Lithuania steps out into the full light of history, the many small independent principalities of which she consisted were perpetually at war with the Russians. The Lithuanian princes endeavoured to gain in power and territory at the expense of the disintegrating State of Kiev, which was just then passing through that distressing phase, the " appanage system."

Mendovg, one of the Lithuanian princes, succeeded in uniting all the other princes with him in fighting against Russia ; he succeeded in making himself master of Vitepsk, Polotsk, and Smolensk. The same reason which in 966 had influenced Boleslav to be baptised now constrained Mendovg to become a Christian—viz., to deprive the mighty Teutonic Order of an excuse for conquering his land in order to Christianise it, and that he and his country might be spared the terrible consequences of such an invasion.

After his death in 1263 strife and disunion reigned once more among the princes, and a century elapsed before Mendovg's ambitions for his country were realised. In course of time the power and influence of his successors increased and spread towards east and south. In Southern Russia the old " Kievite " or " Little " Russia had become a distinct nation having no vital connection with Muscovy. After their country had been ruined by the Mongol invasion, some of the princes fled into Galicia, and others accepted the protection of the Lithuanian princes, of whom Gedemin, Olgerd, Kesturd, and Vitovt were strong, capable rulers.

Gedemin (1315–1337) annexed all " Little Russia," or

" Ukraina," which consisted at that time of Volhynia, Podolia, Kiev, Mohilev—in fact, all the lands which had been ruled over in early days by the Kievite princes, and which might be called the cradle of the Russian Empire. The town-provinces and principalities of Grodno, Polotsk, Vitepsk, Briansk, Smolensk, became vassal-states of Lithuania.

As the conquered lands and new vassal-states were on a much higher level of civilisation and were also superior in size and population, Lithuania gradually adopted the Russian language and civilisation ; indeed, the conquerors became influenced by the conquered to such an extent that Lithuania became a second Russia. After Gedemin's death his vast territories were ruled over by his sons, who agreed in 1345 to unite the whole of Lithuania under the rulership of Olgerd, their brother, who had been baptised into the Greek Orthodox Church, while his brothers had joined the Church of Rome. Thus almost from the start these rival Churches were represented in Lithuania, which fact led, later on, to complications. At that time Lithuania extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea.

When Olgerd came into power he made it his aim to overthrow the rule of the Tatar and to protect the shores of the Black Sea against the destructive Asiatic invasions, and also to destroy the Teutonic Order. Had he been successful, it would have meant for Russia an open road into both the west and south of Europe. But in order to achieve such a gigantic task a nation must be united upon one solid basis, and unfortunately such was not the case with Lithuania and her conquered lands. Besides, the same dynastic wars were being carried on among the Lithuanian princes as were weakening Russia.

By the fourteenth century, however, Lithuania had become the most important State in Eastern Europe, greater and mightier by far than either Poland or Muscovy ; and this was her position when, in 1380, Yagiello, Olgerd's son, married Hedwig, " King " of Poland. The fusion of the two Slavonic nations brought about by this marriage led to Poland-Lithuania becoming one of the most important Powers of mediæval times. This union was, to begin with,

only in the nature of a "personal" union. Nevertheless, it proved exceedingly profitable to both countries, more especially to Lithuania, which was exhausted by the terrible wars with the Teutonic Order—that arch-foe of the Eastern Slavs. Lithuania had therefore nothing to lose and much to gain by such a union; but it was a distinct advantage for the Russian lands, because by this time Poland had become a thoroughly Western State.

In order to marry Hedwig, Yagiello, who was still a heathen, had to be baptised into the Church of Rome, and, under the name of Vladislav II., with the zeal of a new convert, he compelled those of his subjects who were still heathen to follow his example; thus thirty thousand of them were "converted" and baptised *en masse*. He also granted special privileges to the Lithuanian nobles who joined the Church of Rome. This increased the power of that Church in Lithuania to the detriment of the Greek Orthodox Church. He tried, however, to act justly towards his Russian subjects, especially those of the Ukraina, to whom he granted privileges equal with those of the Roman Catholic Lithuanians.

The king-consort had no easy task before him. New wars broke out, especially with the Teutonic Order, which was at that time the first military Power in Europe—indeed, the only Power that had efficient artillery and that was able to mobilise within a fortnight. The whole trend of policy of Eastern Europe was influenced by Yagiello's action, for by the Christianisation of the heathen Lithuanians the Teutonic Order lost its *raison d'être*. Therefore, in future campaigns with Poland-Lithuania, they could no longer reckon on the support of either the Pope or of zealous Christian knights. Crusades had no longer any justification.

This union of the two countries led to a great increase in power and prestige for Poland; for by it not only Galicia, but also the Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, as well as the Voyevods of Bessarabia and Siebenbürgen, became vassals of the King of Poland instead of as hitherto of the King of Hungary.

In the religious sphere, on the other hand, this union contained the germs of future complications, not only religious

but political; for both Constantinople and, later, Moscow, found a *point d'appui* within the realm.

As Stadthalter of Lithuania Yagiello had appointed his brother, who, however, had soon to make way for his ambitious cousin Vitovt, Prince of Grodno, a true statesman, energetic and far-seeing. He aimed at becoming Grand Duke of Lithuania and at severing the union with Poland, in both of which schemes he succeeded, by first inciting the Teutonic Knights to invade Poland and then by assisting Yagiello to drive them back. In return for this service he was granted the dignity he courted. His ambition, however, rose still higher: he did all he could to secure the supremacy for Lithuania in order to reconstitute and then reign over the former empire of Vladimir of Kiev. He extended his power so far into Russia that, with the exception of Suzdal and Ryazan and of Pskov and Novgorod (where, however, he had great influence), the whole country was practically under his sway; for Muscovy was only beginning to develop into a State when Lithuania was at the zenith of her power.

In fact, at this period the Grand Duke of Lithuania and the Khan of the Golden Horde divided between them the overlordship of all Russia.

Vitovt's ambition, however, suffered a crushing blow when his army and that of the Tatars, both of which had been menacing Muscovy, turned upon each other instead, and in the battle which ensued Vitovt's forces were utterly shattered. Whereupon the victorious Tatar returned home, and Muscovy escaped without a scratch. Finally Vitovt concluded peace with his cousin the King of Poland, and swore fealty to him. He promised to support him, and the same sort of arrangement was made later between the Lithuanian Boyars on the one hand and the Polish magnates on the other. This was called the "Union of Radom," and by it the "personal" union of 1386 became a political one. It had also been arranged that after the death of Yagiello no King of Poland should be elected without the knowledge of Lithuania.

This new arrangement and alliance was put into force against the Teutonic Order, and a decisive battle was fought at Tannenberg in 1410. It was less a war of rulers than of

races : the question to be settled once for all was whether Teuton or Slav was to rule in Eastern Europe. The casting vote went to the Slav—the Order was defeated. According to Professor Ranke, " the King of Poland had become master of the Vistula ; it depended upon his will, and upon circumstances which were likely to influence him, whether the Teutonic Order should or should not be wiped out." Yagiello, however, allowed it to go on existing, as he was not able to make the most of his victory, and his armies, scattered all over the country, expended themselves in acts of useless destruction, besides being decimated by epidemics.

At this time the religious question began to create trouble in consequence of the unwise preference shown to Roman Catholics. Until 1413 the Russian princes and nobles had been perfectly satisfied with their position, though all administrative posts were closed to members of the Greek Orthodox Church, to which the majority of Lithuanian Russians belonged. To induce them to change their religion they were now promised equal privileges with those enjoyed by the Szlachta, or Polish nobility.

This impolitic propaganda led to great dissatisfaction, and caused many of the princes and Boyars to leave Lithuania in order to take service with the Tsar of Muscovy ; also it alienated the peasantry.

To counteract this tendency to drift into Muscovy, the Lithuanian ruler summoned a Synod in 1415, which declared the Lithuanian Greek Orthodox Church independent of that in Russia, and placed it as a fact under the direct jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Kiev. In the year 1418 the Metropolitan of Kiev travelled to Constance to offer submission to the Pope of Rome on condition that the Greek Orthodox Christians of Poland and Lithuania should retain their old Byzantine ritual and the use of the Slavonic language. This proposal, however, was not accepted by the Council.

In course of time the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights received fresh reinforcements, for Germany was horrified at the defeat of the Order and indignant with the Poles for having called in the help of thirty thousand Tatars. However, a Muscovite invasion, together with many other circum-

stances, finally led to a truce being made between the Order and Poland.

With the death of Vitovt in 1430 the glory of Lithuania began to wane, and from that date her history is merged in that of Poland. The Russian population, impatient of Polish-Lithuanian rule, began to look to Muscovy for relief; and in order to conciliate his Russian subjects Yagiello granted (1432) to the Little Russian nobles the same privileges as those enjoyed by the Polish and, since 1413, also by the Lithuanian nobles, the nobility of the three countries recognising each other as equals.

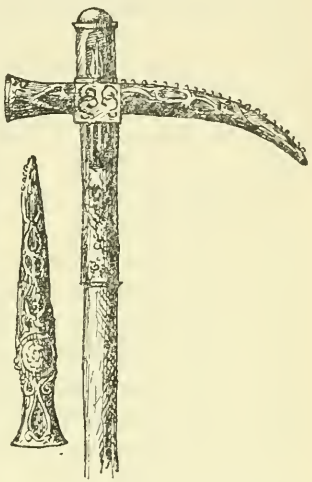
Under Yagiello, Poland reached the zenith of her power, but unfortunately he was not successful in his reorganisation of the internal affairs of the country, and, as he continually created new privileges for the aristocracy, Poland became an oligarchical monarchy.

On the death of Yagiello-Vladislav the magnates chose his eldest son, a lad ten years of age, to be king. During the minority of Vladislav III. certain magnates and the capable but unscrupulous Bishop Olesnicki of Cracow ruled so successfully on his behalf, that the prestige of Poland was considerably heightened. It was due to the influence of this Bishop, a statesman of the first order, that the power of the Church was securely established, and from that time forth Poland became her champion.

In 1440 the boy king was offered the vacant crown of Hungary, which he accepted, and there seemed every prospect of the creation of an Eastern Roman Catholic empire. During the king's residence in Hungary the power of the magnates increased more and more, and, as many important decisions were suspended pending the king's return to Poland, internal disorder became rife. The finances of the kingdom were also crippled by the expenses incurred by the king in his Hungarian undertaking, and in the war against Turkey, which partook of the nature of a crusade. It was in this campaign, at the battle of Varna, in the year 1440, that the young King of Poland and Hungary was killed in action.

His death led to a period of anarchy, and during the interregnum of three years which followed the oligarchical

power of the magnates and prelates rapidly developed to an alarming extent. They offered the crown to their late king's brother, Casimir, who, after the murder of his predecessor, had been proclaimed Grand Duke by the Lithuanians, and as such had behaved as if he were an independent sovereign, even making war upon Masovia, a Polish vassal-state. He knew that the magnates had no other generally acceptable candidate for the throne, and therefore felt himself in a position to dictate terms. His terms for the restitution of Podolia and Volhynia to Lithuania were not agreed to at first by the Polish magnates, but finally, after three years, they gave in, and in 1447 Casimir was crowned King of Poland, only to find that the magnates had no intention of keeping their promises. As an act of retaliation the king refused to confirm their privileges, and this led to an *impasse* which for six years kept matters in a state of continual disorder.



Battle-Axe (17th Century).

It was not until the Polish opposition, headed by the Bishop of Cracow, threatened to depose the king, that a compromise was arrived at, according to which Podolia remain under Polish rule and Volhynia was joined to Lithuania. Casimir's pre-occupation with his political and dynastic ambitions in Bohemia and Hungary was taken advantage of by the Turks, who seized the opportunity to occupy Moldavia and to conquer the estuaries of the Danube and the Dnieper. Muscovy at the same time was increasing in power and trying to come into closer union with the Russian princes in the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom.

King Casimir (1447–1492) made an end of the oligarchical system and inaugurated constitutional rule with the aid of the lesser nobility or Szlachta. In 1448 he created the Chamber of Deputies and instituted the General Diet of the realm ;

yet even this king failed to establish the royal power on a permanent basis. It always remained a personal matter, and the character and personality of the king played a greater rôle than the office itself. The prelates and magnates feared Casimir and envied the Szlachta, who in their turn tried to curry favour with the king. It ended in the oligarchy of the former reigns being replaced by a despotic anarchy, with a corresponding loss of prosperity and power to the country.

The most important political event of the reign of Casimir was a war of thirteen years' duration with the Teutonic Order. Their perpetual feuds were finally settled at the Peace of Thorn in 1466. The Grand Master became a vassal of the King of Poland, and was accorded equal rights with those enjoyed by the Duke of Masovia ; while, on their side, Poles were permitted to become members of the Order. As a result of this treaty, Western Prussia, with that famous castle of the Order, Marienburg, besides Thorn and Dantzig, came into the possession of Poland. This reunion of the Prussian Slavs with their Polish brethren evoked much satisfaction, and aroused hopes of a permanent union of the Western Slav nations—hopes which, unfortunately, were never realised, as the newly acquired territories were still left too much under the rule of their former masters.

What complicated matters still more for the King of Poland was the fact that several of the Russian princes were plotting against him with the object of exchanging Lithuanian for Russian rule. To frustrate their design, on the death of the Prince of Kiev he turned the principality into a Voyevodstov or province.

The Grand Duke of Muscovy, in order to further his own ends, encouraged an active religious propaganda in Lithuania in favour of the Russian Church, and especially aimed at a reunion between the See of Kiev and that of Moscow. In the year 1501 Ivan III. nearly succeeded in taking the much-coveted Smolensk, and would have quite succeeded but for the Livonian Knights of the Sword, who came to the assistance of the Poles and the Lithuanians.

In spite of these internal difficulties, Lithuania and Poland

showed a united front to Muscovy, which had been steadily gaining the ascendancy over the other Russian principalities, while Lithuanian influence was waning. These two rivals were in a constant state of contention over the possession of the much-coveted cities and principalities of Western Russia, which were alternately taken and retaken. Ivan III. started a consistent policy of territorial and national aggrandisement, which was carried on by his successors at the expense of Lithuania: he looked upon himself as the legitimate heir of Vladimir Monomach, and laid claim to all the Old Russian lands, especially Kiev. In the hope of settling the vexed question between the two countries, Ivan married his daughter to Alexander, Grand Duke of Lithuania; but the arrogance of the Tsar, who had just assumed the title of "Ruler of All Russia," and who did not abate one whit of his claims, only increased the difficulty, which finally resulted in war between the father-in-law and the son-in-law, the latter being soon after chosen King of Poland. Ultimately, in 1504, the title assumed by Ivan III. was recognised by Alexander, who had meanwhile become King of Poland. Although the Tsar's ambition was not entirely fulfilled, his territory was increased by a tremendous area, so that the frontier of Muscovy now nearly reached as far as the Dnieper. During the next fifty years, war, alternating with armistices which lasted for six, seven, and eleven years, invariably ended in Muscovy's acquiring more and more of the Old Russian lands.

On the death of Casimir, his fourth son, Alexander, was immediately proclaimed Grand Duke by the Lithuanians, a proceeding contrary to the terms of the union; while the Poles elected as their King the Bishop of Cracow (1492–1500), the sixth son of the late king.

This ruler carried on his father's policy with regard to the weakening of the power of the magnates, and in 1493 he issued a preliminary constitution, which was established three years later under the title of the "Statute of Petrikau." This statute has been designated the Magna Charta of Poland—that is to say, of the nobility, for the position of the citizens and peasants only became worse and worse, the latter suffer-

ing especially from the limitations set upon their liberty of movement.

An unsuccessful campaign against the Hospodar of Moldavia and a Turkish invasion helped to weaken the country; moreover, the new Grand Master of the Teutonic Order refused to take the oath of fealty. After the king's death his brother, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, was elected king, and to him this union with Poland was of great importance.

Alexander had been elected King of Poland by an arrangement of the Polish-Lithuanian senators, who also decided that in the future the King of Poland should, *ipso facto*, be also Grand Duke of Lithuania.

Under Alexander oligarchical rule was again reinstated, with the result that Poland was once more in the throes of anarchy. Attempts were made to stem it in 1504, and again in 1505, when the Constitution of Radom was passed, by which it was fixed that no new laws should be enacted without the consent of both the Senate and the "Landboten." These latter were representatives of the nobility elected by the Provincial Assemblies, to which they had to report the decisions arrived at by the General Diet, which were not infrequently repudiated by the Provincial Assemblies. The fact was that the whole legislative machinery was unwieldy; and that it had become so was due to the fact that each and all of the nobles desired to have, and insisted upon having, a full share in the ruling of the country. Only a king of very strong character could expect to keep up even a semblance of independence under such circumstances.

After the death of Alexander his fifth brother was elected king, and from 1506 to 1548 Poland was blessed with an energetic and capable ruler in the person of Sigismund I. It was high time, for the political difficulties besetting the kingdom were great. Sigismund, however, was able to cope successfully both with the foes without and the wrangling parties within his realm. During his reign Poland passed through the most glorious period of her history.

His queen, being an Italian of the house of Sforza, drew many foreigners to her Court. She favoured the Reformation, the influence of which was beginning to be felt

in Poland and in the lands subject to the Teutonic Order; nevertheless, a royal edict prohibiting the circulation of Martin Luther's writings was issued and an Inquisitorial Commission instituted. But students returning to Poland from German universities were very successful in spreading the new doctrine among the people, and all attempts to quell the movement at this time were unsuccessful. The clergy of Lesser Poland repudiated their allegiance to Rome, and a German Protestant school was established at Vilna. Protestantism, however, gained no firm hold upon the Polish nation, which remained a Roman Catholic country.

In the middle of the sixteenth century religious matters again claimed much attention. An attempt was made to create a national Church, the celibacy of the clergy was to be abolished and the Sacrament of the Holy Communion was to be given to the laity in both kinds, and the services to be read in the "vulgar tongue," instead of in Latin. Such an arrangement would have led to closer union with the Greek Church and would have been politically advantageous. But unfortunately the king delayed coming to a decision on this vital question, and when, after the Council of Trent, a Papal Nuncio was sent to inform him of the decrees passed, he declared to the Diet that he meant to live and die a Roman Catholic. The movement for a national Church thus lost all official support. In the same year, 1563, Jesuits came to Poland, and finding the Protestants disunited, some being Moravians, others Hussites, Calvinists, etc., they were able to triumph over them and to gain the ascendancy. In spite of these religious troubles, however, Poland became more consolidated politically, and administrative and legal reforms were introduced.

In order to pass a law, the Diet, which consisted of the Senate and the Second Chamber of elected members, had to be unanimous, this desire for unanimity in voting being an ancient Slav tradition. Voting took place according to a system known as the "liberum veto," which, although intended to safeguard the interests of the minority, became by its very nature a hindrance to legislation, leading to stagnation and disorder. How was it possible to pass any

law when the "not allowed" of one voter was sufficient to prevent its passage?

In order to assure his son's succession to the crown, the king had him elected and crowned King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, and married him to the daughter of King Ferdinand. On her death he married the beautiful Barbara Radziwill, whose relations were raised to princely rank by the Emperor Charles, and from that time the family played an influential part in the history of Poland.

When his turn came, Sigismund Augustus ascended his father's throne without opposition. His reign was prolific in attempts at reform, which culminated in the "Union of Lublin," whereby Lithuania was incorporated into Poland in spite of the opposition of the Lithuanian delegates; the Little Russians, on the other hand, were strongly in favour of it.

By the union it was decided that Poland-Lithuania should form one commonwealth or republic, under an elected king and with Warsaw as capital. This "Rietch-Pospolitie" (Res-publica), as it was called, was to consist of the "kingdom," *i.e.* the original Poland, with part of the Old Russian lands, and of the "principality," Lithuania; each of the two divisions to be represented at the same Diet. By this arrangement, however, certain parts of Lithuanian territory came under the direct rule of the crown of Poland—namely, Volhynia, Podolia, and the Ukraina, which latter again consisted of the former principalities of Kiev, Poltava, and part of Tchernigov. These lands were allowed to retain their autonomy and the Ruthenian language; they were also accorded equality with the Poles—"the free with the free; the equal with the equal." All the former restrictions imposed upon the adherents of the Russian Church were removed, and goodwill was restored once again.

Thus all that remained of Lithuania's former glory was local autonomy, separate finances, and a separate army; but as a separate Power she had ceased to exist.

The commonwealth was at last united and the administration reorganised; but one point remained which was sure to lead to trouble in the future—the power of the crown

was still too weak. In spite of all the attempts made by various kings to control them, the magnates still retained their supremacy in the Diet as well as in the country. Some of these nobles lived like princes, supporting armies of their own, and even waging war on neighbouring Powers on their own account. In the hands of such men the kings became helpless tools.

During the sixteenth century all Polish noblemen were regarded as equal, and the owner of a single acre of land ranked as high as the king's son. But the right to nobility might be lost in any of the following ways : it was forfeited by any nobleman who committed a heinous offence, or who entered into trade, or who permitted a man who was not a noble to use his coat-of-arms.

The difficulty of the succession became more acute than ever when Sigismund Augustus, the last Yagiellon, died without leaving an heir. Too proud to live under an hereditary ruler with the risk of probable depotism, the Poles determined to see whether an elected king would not be more amenable to control. To quote a contemporary : " This was done to the end that all princes of Christendom who had due merits and qualifications might have the right to aspire to the crown of Poland."

This new departure of opinion started Poland on her downward course, each succeeding century witnessing several elections, with all the strife and partisanship they were certain to entail. Practically every European Court put up its candidate, and this naturally led to endless intrigues. The kings themselves became mere puppets in the hands of an unscrupulous aristocracy. One party now looked to Austria, the other to Muscovy, for a candidate. If the latter had been chosen, the perpetual feuds with Muscovy over Lithuania would naturally have been settled.

It is not surprising that candidates for the crown of Poland were not wanting. As, however, there was no precedent for electing a king, some system had first to be organised, and it was arranged, after much discussion, that all nobles, as such, should be the electors, choosing the king directly through the Diet. Forty thousand of the nobility

consequently met for this purpose under the auspices of the Papal Nuncio, and Henry of Valois was elected as the most profitable and innocuous candidate.

The stipulations made with the French prince were as follows :—He was to build a fleet, and in case of war to equip an army, at his own expense ; he was to spend forty thousand florins on his new kingdom, besides having to pay all the debts contracted by the last king ; he had to confirm all the privileges and rights enjoyed by the nobility at the time of his election—this last condition being carefully drawn up in detail.

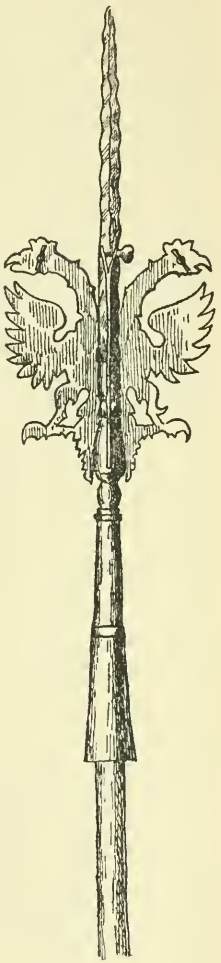
Henry of Valois, the younger brother of Charles IX., King of France, accepted these conditions, as well as the principle of elective monarchy—the " pacta conventa " which had made him a shadow-king. He guaranteed religious toleration, and promised not to make war or conclude peace without the consent of the senators, some of whom were always to be at his side as advisers. Above all, he had to promise not to make independent use of the ancient right of the king to mobilise the whole nation (*i.e.* the " pospolite rusziene "). The Diet was not to be summoned oftener than every two years, and then for a term of six weeks only. Should the king infringe any one of these conditions, his subjects were absolved from their allegiance to him.

Henry was crowned in Cracow ; but he soon began to sigh for the pleasures of Paris. Five months later news reached him of the death of his brother the king, and that he was now King of France, whereupon he quickly forsook his Polish kingdom, which he considered rather barbaric.

The king's flight left the nation in a state of mingled anger and perplexity. After some difficulty and many differences between the Senate and the nobility, Stefan Bathory, Voyevod of Transylvania, a vassal-state of the Sultans, was elected king on condition that he married the sister of the ex-king.

The new king (1576–1586) had no easy task before him, but he was a born statesman and leader of men. He decided to be king in reality, not a mere figurehead. He was the last true statesman the undivided kingdom of Poland

possessed. Just, far-seeing, and wise, he did his best to strengthen the royal power and to regain the lost prestige of the country by successful wars ; he also turned the Cossacks of the Dnieper from enemies into friends of the Polish crown by taking a certain number of them into his service and using them against Turkey. He kept that Power quiet, and was able to concentrate his arms against Muscovy and at the same time prevent the Cossacks from making a raid nearer home. Although a devout Roman Catholic, he was not intolerant; nevertheless, it was during his reign that the Jesuits began to take full possession of Poland, opening many schools and colleges all over the country.



Halbert
(17th Century.)

In spite of his statesmanship, he had not succeeded in establishing the principle of monarchical government. After his death there was an interregnum, for no decision could be arrived at as to whom to elect. The Hetman of the crown, Zamozski, who had a very good claim to be elected, nobly withdrew in order to prevent war, without, however, achieving his object, for sanguinary battles were fought between the partisans of the Austrian and Swedish candidates. Finally, the son of the Swedish king, a nephew of the Queen Dowager, was elected. He reigned under the name of Sigismund (1587–1632), and under this pupil of the Jesuits religious difficulties once more became extreme.

Fear of Russian propaganda, and the fact that a Patriarchate had been established at Moscow, decided the Polish-Lithuanian rulers to suggest once more a union of the Greek Orthodox with the Roman Church, and the union refused by the Roman See in 1418 was agreed

upon in 1595. This decision, however, did not provide a solution of the difficulty, especially as the bishops were divided amongst themselves, those of Lemberg and Przemysl refusing to join the proposed union. From that time the Orthodox Church was no longer officially recognised, and violent persecution of her members commenced at the instigation of the Polish Jesuits. All this led, in 1599, to the "Confederation of Vilna," which was formed for the protection of the rights and privileges of all "Dissidents," whether Greek Orthodox or Protestant, of whom there were a great number, for the principles of the Reformation had found ready acceptance among both nobles and citizens in Lithuania.

At the end of the sixteenth century these so-called "Confederations" began to play an important rôle, each being under the leadership of a marshal. The objects of these unions being to secure certain ends which were not within the limits of constitutional law, they were formed by the dissatisfied parties, and special diets were held in which the majority of votes decided the question. Although occasionally they proposed good measures, these unions virtually represented a State within a State, and the commonwealth, which was renowned abroad for military prowess, suffered at home considerably at the hands of unscrupulous leaders armed with dictatorial power.

On the death of the King of Sweden the King of Poland became heir to his throne, but Protestant Sweden did not wish to have him for a ruler. For half a century Poland and Sweden were at war, which ended in loss for both of them but in ultimate gain for Russia.

Polish influence had meanwhile become strong in Muscovy, where the Rurik dynasty had died out. Sigismund wished to place himself on the throne instead of his son Vladislav, whom one party in Muscovy was willing to support on condition that he became a member of the Russian Church. But the Russian people hated the Poles, who had supported the pseudo-Dmitri, and whose arrogant behaviour moreover had greatly incensed them. All this led to bitter strife and profitless wars.

Vladislav, Sigismund's son and heir, aimed still higher

than his father—his ambition was to unite the crowns of Sweden, Poland, and Muscovy, and he managed to ally himself by marriage with both Austria and France. He died at the outbreak of the greatest Cossack rising, in 1648, and was succeeded by his brother Casimir, a cardinal, but in whom the three dynasties, Yagiellon, Vasa, and Hapsburg, were represented. As he was cardinal, he had to be released from his vows before becoming king, and in order to save the country the expense of keeping up establishments for two queens he married his brother's widow.

The primary duty of Casimir (1648–1668) was to quell the rising of the Zaporogian Cossacks, who, under their Hetman Peter Konaszewicz, were at the zenith of their power. They terrorised the shores of the Black Sea, and even burned the suburbs of Constantinople. The registered Cossacks also fought for Poland against Muscovy, but in spite of this their legitimate demands for representation and for better treatment in the Ukraina were disregarded. Polish nobles, Jesuits, and Jews oppressed the population of these provinces to such an extent that when they did rise up the desperate inhabitants waged a terrible warfare under their Hetman Bogdan Hmielnitski ; and finally all the Zaporogian and a large number of the Ukraina Cossacks joined Muscovy.

Civil war, too, was raging in Poland, and the ex-cardinal king, who soon grew tired of wielding power under such circumstances, abdicated and retired. This abdication only created new difficulties, as once again the vexed question of the succession was raised. The Emperor, the King of France, and the Elector of Brandenburg suggested candidates ; but at last a native magnate was elected, Prince Wisniowiecki, who, although the son of a famous father, proved himself weak and incapable. Both the Turks and the Cossacks profited by the consequent disorder, and Poland lost the better part of the Ukraina and Podolia.

At this time confederations were formed which fought against each other ; and after the death of Wisniowiecki, General Ian Sobieski, renowned for his victories, was elected king (1674–1679). A gallant warrior, Sobieski spent most of his time fighting the Turks. He was called to assist

Austria against them when they were threatening Vienna, and it was owing to the victories won by him in this campaign that Christendom was saved from further Moslem inroads.

Internal conditions in Poland, however, grew rapidly worse : intrigues, strife, and general demoralisation became the order of the day. Poles as well as foreign diplomatists availed themselves of the distracted condition of the country under elected kings to draw Poland into one or other of the great political combinations of the European Powers, the Kings of Poland taking sides according to family considerations. In 1696 intrigues culminated in the election to the throne of Poland of Friedrich Augustus, the Elector of Saxony, who had more money to spend on bribery than either of his rivals. The Protestant Elector, who in order to ascend the throne of Poland had to become a Roman Catholic, taxed his own country heavily to cover the expenditure entailed by this undertaking. Nor did Poland gain anything by her new ruler, who showed no sympathy for his subjects and took no interest in their welfare ; and so, after he had waged unsuccessful wars against Turkey, Sweden, and Russia, his deposition was demanded by the victorious King of Sweden. The Polish king, wishing to secure peace at any price, three times suggested a partition of Poland if the Powers would help him. At that time, however, neither Prussia, Russia, nor Denmark agreed to his proposal.

Shortly after this the king was deposed by the magnates and another king—Stanislav Lesczynski (1704–1709)—elected and crowned ; this made the contest more bitter than ever, and it only came to an end when at last the Saxon gave up his claim. But the doom of Poland was approaching.

The great Northern War between Charles XII. of Sweden and Peter the Great was for the most part fought out on Polish soil, with the result that Poland was left ruined and devastated. The country was in such a hopeless condition that the only question to be decided was whether she should be annexed by Russia or shared between Russia and other powers. Poland's day seemed over : all hope of reforming her was lost —factions within and wars without had irretrievably ruined the kingdom. The lack of a strong Government and of a

regular army had led to her being completely disregarded by her powerful neighbours, by whom she was looked upon as a battle-field upon which they could settle their quarrels, although she had no concern in them.

Equally desperate was the internal condition of the country : the peasants were mere chattels, of less value than cattle, and cities and towns were impoverished by the continual wars. As for the nobility, a large majority of the lesser nobles were ruined, and lived in a state of dependence on the few great magnates who, as office-bearers, still possessed power. The lower clergy were ignorant and drunken, the higher preoccupied with gaining money and power and rivalling the magnates in immorality. The Jesuits, as trainers of the young, were much to blame for the low moral tone that prevailed. They inculcated false ideals and puerile ambitions, and whipped every atom of a true sense of honour out of their pupils.

At last even the Poles realised that such a state of things could not continue, and a serious attempt at reform was made. Two influential Polish families, the Potockis [1] (known as the " National " or " Patriotic " party) and the Czartoryskis (who received the sobriquet of " The Family "), tried to help their country, but, unable to do so unaided, they were obliged to call in supporters from outside. The Potockis prevailed upon France, Turkey, and Sweden to assist them, while the Czartoryskis applied to Russia. Bitter feuds raged between these two families—and all in love for their Fatherland !

With the help of the Empress Catherine II. the Czartoryskis gained the ascendancy, and her favourite, Stanislav Poniatovski, a clever and handsome but weak and dissolute young man, was elected king. It was expected that he would bring in reforms, but, unfortunately, Catherine refused to sanction the abolition of the " liberum veto," and once more troubles arose. New Confederations were formed, risings and insurrections broke out, only to be put down with appalling cruelty. The means used to obtain liberty and independence merely led to hopeless anarchy and greater subservience to a foreign Power.

[1] Pototski.

This was the moment for the European Powers to interfere. In 1772 the first partition of Poland between Austria, Prussia, and Russia [1] took place. The Polish Diet had to confirm the Act whereby their kingdom was dismembered. In vain the king pleaded for help from other Powers, and Poland, unable to fight for her existence unaided, lost one-third of her territory.

Ten comparatively uneventful years followed. The same Diet which had sanctioned the partition passed some useful laws: a Commission of Education was elected, the Order of the Jesuits abrogated, and the revenue of their confiscated lands used for educational purposes; the universities of Cracow and Vilna were reorganised and seminaries for teachers and schools for girls and for Jewish children instituted. A "Society for Elementary School Books" was founded in 1776 by Ignaz Potocki. King Stanislav did his utmost to break down the political isolation of Poland: he proposed an alliance against the Turks to Catherine of Russia, who, however, not only refused this offer, but in her reply demanded a decrease of his army. She forbade all further reforms, which were also being hindered by intrigues within the country. To add to these obstacles, Poland was made use of by the great Powers whenever their perpetually shifting alliances made such a course desirable.

In 1792 a second partition was made between Prussia and Russia, the Diet being forced to agree to this without discussion. A great national rising under the patriot Kosciusko was the result of this action. However, the Polish soldiers were unable to resist Russian and Prussian troops; Cracow was occupied and Warsaw besieged, and the heroic Polish leader was wounded and taken prisoner by the Russians. Tradition credits him with the famous exclamation, "Finis Poloniæ!" Even the National Council, which had organised and led this rising, at last realised the hopelessness of further resistance, and Warsaw capitulated. This treaty for the third partition of Poland was ratified in St Petersburg in 1795. The king abdicated, and Poland ceased to exist as an independent nation.

[1] See chapter on "Catherine the Great."

Among the many causes, both internal and external, avoidable and unavoidable, that worked together to bring about the downfall of Poland, the following may be enumerated :—the perpetual feuds and intrigues among the aristocracy ; the self-seeking policy of the magnates, both lay and clerical ; the persecution of the Greek Orthodox subjects by the Jesuits ; the lack of an indigenous middle class (which was only represented by Germans and Jews) ; and, finally, the character of the elected kings. A really strong man would never have agreed to the conditions of the proffered kingship, which entailed dependence upon the wishes of the powerful nobles ; and the fact that every European Power was able to put up a candidate for the throne of Poland drew that unhappy land into the quarrels of the royal families of Western Europe. To this long list of drawbacks must be added Poland's unavoidable but fatal lack of natural frontiers, which predestined her to absorption into a greater State. But this fact does not lessen the guilt of these Powers who divided her.

Although Poland had ceased to exist as an independent Power, her patriots did not meekly acquiesce in her fate. Unable to help themselves, they looked to the enemies of their enemies for aid, and Napoleon showed willingness to assist them ; but this was merely a pretext for adding men to his own army, and thousands of Poles actually served under his banner in the " Polish Legion." With regard to this an English military attaché remarked to Prince Czartoryski : " One would think the Poles themselves must be sensible of the fact that Napoleon takes no real interest in their welfare —that he simply looks upon Poland as the stepping-stone to his ambitions. His is the protection that the vulture gives to the lamb." In fact, the only result of his protection was that, after the Peace of Tilsit, Napoleon made the Polish lands he had conquered into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, with a Saxon king as Grand Duke.

At this time the gloom which had enveloped Poland was penetrated by a ray of hope in the person of the Russian Tsar. Prince Adam Czartoryski, taken to St Petersburg as a hostage by Catherine II., had been brought into close contact

with her grandson, and it was this bond of friendship between a Polish nobleman and the ruler of Russia which led the Poles to hope for relief from the Tsar. Czartoryski was a man whose patriotism was beyond suspicion; incapable of self-seeking, a true knight "sans peur et sans reproche," loyally serving his friend Alexander I., he was nevertheless mindful of the needs of his own country. The Tsar appointed him Minister of Foreign Affairs, and also placed all the schools of his newly acquired Polish lands under his supervision.[1]

Alexander, during the early years of his reign, was quite sincere in raising Prince Czartoryski's hopes for the restitution of the kingdom of Poland; but unfortunately the Tsar's mental and political attitude changed in accordance with his political alliances, and the realisation of his friend's hopes fell to the ground.

Meanwhile Napoleon again needed soldiers, and held out renewed promises of support to the Poles. His offer was accepted with enthusiasm, and seventy-five thousand men were mobilised, sixty thousand of whom joined the "Grande Armée." Terrible was the disillusionment of the Poles when the unhappy remnant of their defeated army was pursued by Cossacks into their own country.

At the Congress of Vienna, 1815, the Grand Duchy of Warsaw was wiped off the map of Europe and the final partition of Poland ensued.

Alexander I., however, was genuine in his desire to restore to the Poles their fatherland and to grant Poland a constitution. Lord Castlereagh warned him against this course of action, and wrote to the Emperor: "One single slip from unlimited power to constitutional liberty can alter the march of a whole century. Your proposal can easily produce political disturbances in your own country." But Alexander only replied that he felt it imperative to satisfy the legitimate demands of the Poles. In the year 1818 he granted Poland a constitution.

For a few years all went well and a period of progress and prosperity set in. The Grand Duke Constantine, the Tsar's brother, whose morganatic wife was a Polish lady, was

[1] See chapter on "Alexander I."

appointed commander-in-chief in Poland. But, although genuinely interested in the Poles, he was unfortunately very unpopular. The aristocracy, in their manner to the Grand Duke, expressed the feeling of the people in general. Their uncompromising attitude strengthened the hand of the Old Russian party, which was gaining influence over the Tsar; and the more the Polish nobility increased their demands, the less was the Emperor inclined to give in to them. Consequently various political organisations developed which vented the grievances of the Poles in the Diet and the press. Matters grew rapidly worse; reaction and repression added fuel to the fire, and a multitude of political unions and societies sprang up. A conspiracy was organised by the students of the Military Academy, who were joined by other young people, and, in 1830, an insurrection broke out.[1]

The conspiracy was supported by some of the troops, and the Grand Duke was obliged to withdraw from Warsaw with his Guards, and a fortnight later there was not a single Russian soldier in the kingdom. But as the young conspirators had no matured plan for the future, Prince Czartoryski and the Minister of Finance took matters in hand and proclaimed a provisional Government. The Diet, which met on 26th January 1831, declared the house of Romanoff deposed, and under the leadership of the popular prince a national Government was established.

Russia meanwhile had brought her army to cope with the insurrection, which was crushed after severe fighting. Insufficient military preparations and internal dissensions doomed the Polish army to defeat.

This unexpected rising was punished by the Emperor with great severity. The constitution granted by Alexander I. was withdrawn and replaced by an "Organic Statute" which abolished the autonomy of Poland, and incorporated her army with that of Russia. Life became unbearable; the University of Vilna was closed, and the "Society of Friends of Science" suspended; the Russian language was made compulsory in the schools and for all who were employed in Government service; religious persecution also broke out.

[1] See chapter on "Nicholas I."

When pleaded with by a Frenchman to let mercy and not severity dictate his actions, the Emperor Nicholas I. said in reply, among other things : " I know that Europe judges me unjustly. Both my brother and I are held responsible for what we have not done—the idea of the division of Poland was not ours. This act has been the cause of much trouble to Europe, has cost much blood and may cost still more ; but we must not be held responsible for this. We had to take conditions as we found them : I have certain responsibilities as Tsar of Russia. It is my bounden duty to prevent a repetition of those mistakes which have given birth to the present sanguinary war. Between the Poles and myself there can only be '*une méfiance absolue.*'" He then proceeded to enumerate the many benefits his brother, the Emperor Alexander I., had " showered " on that nation which he had never attempted to take away. He spoke of the economic and financial improvements and of the reorganisation of the army, which, he complained, had been turned by the Poles against their benefactors.

Although conquered by the superior forces of Russia, many Poles refused to submit to the new régime. A stream of emigrants flowed into France, where Polish princes and commoners awaited impatiently an opportunity of fighting once more for national freedom. There, in Paris, suffering, home-sickness, and disappointed hopes opened the floodgates of the nation's intellectual treasures.

Polish patriots hoped to profit by the issues of the Crimean War, and looked to Napoleon III. to assist them—but in vain.

Although, on his first visit to Warsaw in 1856, Alexander II. declared himself in agreement with his father's policy, he nevertheless recalled the Poles who had been banished to Siberia, and repealed the martial law under which the whole country had been placed. The success of the Italian war of Liberation served as an incentive to renewed political agitation, and, in spite of the conflicts and disorder which broke out in 1861, the Emperor granted full autonomy to Poland in 1862, under the presidency of his liberal-minded brother Constantine. Attempts made on the life of this Grand Duke, however, led to reprisals, which in their turn brought about the Revolu-

tion of 1863, the success of which was very transient. Poland was doomed, and it was Bismarck who contributed largely to her downfall. Just when there was a leaning at the Russian Court towards compliance with the legitimate demands of the Poles, Bismarck stepped in and by his intrigues and the weight of his influence as Prussian Ambassador turned the scale in favour of oppression. He frankly admitted later on that he had opposed those claims of Poland because "a satisfied Poland would be bad for Germany." In pursuance of his selfish and ruthless policy the future "unifier" of Germany thus sacrificed a weaker nation's happiness and welfare.

General Berg and Count Mouraviev, who was always spoken of as the "hangman," stamped out with great ferocity the last sparks of this rebellion, in which, it should be noted, no peasants took part, having just then been liberated from serfdom by the Emperor.

In every sphere of life reaction and repression were now ruthlessly practised. The Russian language was the only medium permitted for teaching, Polish becoming merely an extra subject. Three hundred out of four hundred and eighty towns had their status lowered and were reduced to the rank of villages. The Russian judicial system was introduced, with the exception of trial by jury, etc. All these changes, together with the extreme severity of General Gurko, the Governor-General, led in 1884 to one conspiracy after another, all of which were put down in the usual manner.

After the catastrophe of 1863, which had so greatly disillusioned and sobered the nation, a more constructive policy, less romantic and less unpractical than that put forward by the former dreamers of independence, was pursued by many of the more thoughtful Poles. Much blood had been shed and tremendous sacrifices had been made ; wounds had now to be healed and all that had been lost in social and industrial life had to be made good. This new tendency can be traced in the literature of the years following the upheaval of 1863. The old narrow traditions of nationality were changed for new and broader ones as the Poles came to realise that a national life was possible even in the absence of political freedom.

It was the policy of the Russian Government, however, to crush these national aspirations. It was thought that this could be achieved by confiscating the property of the nobles and by wearing out the opposition of the Church through bringing pressure from Rome to bear upon her. It was also thought that the middle class could be denationalised by the Russification of educational and official life. The peasants were to be won over by reminding them of what they had suffered at the hands of the nobles, and Russia was held up to them as their deliverer. The Russian bureaucracy, however, made a miscalculation with regard to the depth and intensity of the national feeling. When the peasant realised what was aimed at by the new system, and when he found himself persecuted on account of his nationality and his language, then he, being pious and loyal by nature, began to see through the machinations of the Government and the Church of Rome and to regard both as bitter enemies. All this led to an estrangement between the Government and people, which has since become a danger to the monarchy, has imperilled the loyalty of the peasants, and has even to some extent estranged them from their national Church.

During the last revolutionary movement in Russia, in 1905, the Social Democratic party found great support in Poland. After the Poles had taken an active part in the sporadic outbreaks which led to a constitution being granted to Russia and a Duma summoned in which Poland was to be represented, new repression was meted out to her. The bureaucracy has since tried to kill the national spirit by every means in its power; but the Poles realise that, so long as the Polish language is spoken by the people, that spirit cannot die, and, though risking a heavy punishment, many Poles have taught their own and other people's children their language in secret; and in this quiet, unostentatious manner the younger generation has been trained in national aspirations.

Throughout the history of Poland, even when internal dissension made her an easy prey to her stronger neighbours, and when her unity was merely a diplomatic expression, the cry of the nation has always been for a united and autonomous Poland. The answer to this cry seemed to have come at last;

for on 5th August 1914 the Grand Duke Nicholas addressed the following appeal to the Poles of Russia, Germany, and Austria :—

" Poles ! the hour has sounded when the sacred dream of your fathers and your forefathers may be realised. A century and a half has passed since the living body of Poland was torn in pieces ; but the soul of the country is not dead. It continues to live, inspired by the hope that there will come for the Polish people an hour of resurrection and of fraternal reconciliation with Russia. The Russian army brings you the solemn news of this reconciliation, which obliterates the frontiers dividing the Polish peoples, which it unites conjointly under the sceptre of the Russian Tsar. Under his sceptre Poland will be governed again, free in her religion and her language. Russian autonomy only expects from you the same respect for the rights of the nationalities to which history has bound you. With open heart and brotherly hand Great Russia advances to meet you. She believes that the sword with which Poland struck down her enemies at Grünwald has not yet rusted. From the shores of the Pacific to the North Sea the Russian armies are marching. The dawn of a new life is beginning for you, and in this glorious dawn is seen the sign of the Cross, the symbol of suffering and of the resurrection of the peoples."

This proclamation was hailed with enthusiasm by Western Europe, which has always sympathised with the Poles. The Tsar's act, prompted though it may be by political wisdom and military exigencies, is none the less one of historic justice ; we may confidently look forward to the establishment of peace and prosperity in an autonomous Poland, and we trust that the future will be less troubled than her history shows her to have been in the past.

CHAPTER XXVI

FINLAND AND HER RELATION TO THE TSARS

THE history of Finland is very little known, and yet it is worth while for all admirers of liberty, courage, and strength of character to follow the development of the nation which inhabits that charming northern country called by its own poets and people "The Last-born Daughter of the Sea," or "The Land of a Thousand Lakes."

Everyone who has visited Finland must have come under the spell of its peculiar beauty, chaste and calm, possibly a little stern, like her rocks; quiet as the winter spell which keeps all life in abeyance for months, only to break out again into the perfect beauty of a northern spring with its long days and light nights. Water and rocks, however, offer little to the people, and many of the brave inhabitants of this "Land of a Thousand Lakes" have a terribly hard existence; yet undaunted they have taken up the fight with stern nature and have conquered. But at times their enemy gets the upper hand, and then famine with all its horrors knocks at the door.

In the character of the Finns—unyielding and deep, quiet and full of poetry—we find the nature of the land reflected. Their life on sea and lake, in forest and field, has taught them to love and understand nature. Their prototype, Wainomoinen, the ancient minstrel, expresses this when he says, "Nature was my only teacher, woods and water my instructors."

The beautiful national epic, the *Kalevala*, gives us glimpses of the prehistoric days of Finland, while the oldest traditions of Scandinavia tell of a race of giants who, hostile to the gods, lived a wild life in dens and caves, clothed in rough skins of

animals, but also that they were renowned for one good quality—absolute adherence to their word.

In early days Scandinavian vikings made frequent raids on the coast of Finland, and in 1156 King Erik of Sweden organised a crusade against the heathen Finns, and incidentally to annex their territory;—expansion by grace of the Church was the normal method in those days. Bishop Henry, an Englishman, and the king's right hand, was killed by the fanatical heathen Finns; but later on, in virtue of his martyrdom, he became the patron saint of Finland. In 1220, sixty-four years later, another Englishman, the Dominican monk Thomas, was appointed the first Bishop of Åbo, the cathedral of which was dedicated to St Henry.

The conquest of Finland was completed in 1293, and her history until the nineteenth century must be included in that of Sweden. Fifty years later Sweden extended to Finland the same form of government as that already established in her own provinces. The personal liberty of the people was guaranteed, and slavery, even for prisoners of war, was abolished: thus for more than five hundred years every Finn has been a freeborn man.

There can be no doubt that the conquest by Sweden was the best thing that could have happened to the Finns, who, a mere handful, were living in a country devoid of natural frontiers and defences, and remote from the current of European civilisation.

Finland was bound to be absorbed by either Sweden or Russia, and if Russian princes had annexed it at that time the result would have been very different. The Swedes, on the other hand, were at a comparatively advanced stage of culture, but neither near enough nor numerous enough to swamp the Finns altogether.

The laws and social order of Sweden were introduced into Finland without resistance. The people, in fact, willingly accepted them, but adapted and fashioned them according to their peculiar needs and character and thus made them their own.

In the sixteenth century a son of the Swedish king, Gustav Vasa, was made Duke of Finland, which by that time had

her own Diet, besides sending representatives to the Swedish Parliament. She was in many ways an autonomous State, although linked to Sweden by very strong living bonds which were broken only by political exigencies.

The Finnish and Swedish populations lived together without vital fusion, yet in perfect harmony, like two streams which flow side by side without intermingling. They never quarrelled; on the contrary, they stood shoulder to shoulder whenever the sword had to be drawn, for there had never been any oppression on the part of the conqueror.

Nearly every century witnessed some war between Sweden and Russia, and almost all the battles between them were fought on Finnish soil. For centuries the ravages and miseries of war swept over Finland. The loyal Finnish people shared with Sweden defeat and victory. Generation after generation patiently and persistently rebuilt burnt-down towns and hamlets and managed to survive these evil times, although the brunt of the battle was always borne by them. In return Sweden gave Finland able administrators, men of intellect, rectitude, and energy, under whose generous rule the Finns were able to develop their latent powers.

Equality between man and man has always been one of the leading features of Finland's legislation, and thus it was social not political inferiority which separated the Finnish-speaking majority from the Swedish-speaking minority, and this was merely due to the fact that the majority consisted of peasants and labourers. In course of time these differences were levelled.

Finland became Protestant at the same time as Sweden and accepted the Lutheran doctrine, but retained Episcopacy, and the highest ecclesiastical authority remained vested in the Archbishop of Åbo. Probably the most decisive influence which worked for the steady advance in civilisation was this fact that Finland had become Protestant. The Bible was translated in 1548, the Church fostered education, and as confirmation was cumpulsory, and no one unable to read could be confirmed, illiteracy soon became the exception. Thus in the course of years Finland became one of the most

advanced countries, rich and poor having equal chances and the same educational advantages and thus access to all positions. This led to Finland's becoming a truly democratic nation.

During the Northern War (1700–1721) most of the country was devasted, impoverished, depopulated, and in the hands of a ruthless enemy. In 1703 Peter the Great had taken several fortified places in Ingermanland, Esthland, and Livonia. By the Treaty of Nystadt in 1721 all Ingermanland and part of the provinces of Kexholm and of Viborg, with the town of Viborg, came to Russia. Russia's gain was Sweden's loss, and the close proximity of the new Russian capital to Finland constituted a danger which threatened to become acute, and from 1741–1743 a new war between the two great Powers was fought out on Finnish soil.

The Empress Elizabeth intrigued in Finland. She suggested that that country should voluntarily join Russia, and her manifesto was the first direct intimation of Russia's intention to annex Finland.

Conditions continuing most unsatisfactory in this unfortunate country, a conspiracy was set on foot by a few ambitious men who hoped to secure for Finland independence under Russian protection. Several Swedish officers entered into correspondence with the Empress Catherine on this subject. This of course was treason, but the misery of the country under a series of incapable kings, who never sent sufficient help to Finland, had made these men desperate. Their conspiracy, however, led to nothing. Some years later when war had again been declared against Sweden, Catherine sent a message to Finland advising the people to force the Swedish Army to leave the country; they were to proclaim themselves independent, to convoke a Diet, and to frame such laws as they thought right, she promising to support the Finns with her army and to uphold their resolution. The bulk of the Finns, however, showed no desire to take advantage of the offer.

In the year 1808 war broke out afresh between Russia and Sweden. Alexander I. made renewed promises of liberty and autonomy under Russia to the Finnish people. They

were invited to remain quiet and to fear nothing ; they were advised not to trust Sweden, and least of all " that enemy of tranquillity and peace—England."

The bad generalship of the Swedish commander in Finland proved disastrous ; continually retreating with his troops, he left the Finns to battle alone against the superior forces of the Russian army. Before long the strong fortress of Sveaborg was treacherously surrendered ; of this capitulation Professor Danielsen says : " The disgrace which the capitulation of Sveaborg had attached to the Swedish and Finnish armies was washed away in blood, in Revolaks, Lappe, Alvaro, and a number of other battles, which the Finns have the more cause to think of with pride because their fathers fought alone, without assistance from Sweden, and in spite of the incapacity of the commander whom the Swedish king had given them." Although this heroic resistance was useless for shaking off the overwhelming Russian forces, it was nevertheless of great political importance.

At the Russian Court there were two conflicting currents of opinion between which the Emperor Alexander I. wavered for a time. The one was to annex Finland and to make it a Russian province, while the other advised the guaranteeing of liberty and autonomy to Finland. The Emperor Alexander I. felt inclined to follow the first suggestion, and by the Treaty of Tilsit even arranged with Napoleon to compensate himself with Finland as he could not get Constantinople. Europe was informed of this proposed annexation, but the Emperor reckoned without his host—he was like the hunter who sold the skin before he shot the bear. His armies were losing, and by a regular guerilla warfare the Finnish peasants were harassing the Russians ; there was also the very real danger of Sweden's being aroused and sending her fleet to St Petersburg. All this influenced Alexander I. to listen to his wiser advisers, who moreover touched the sympathetic side of his nature. The war with Sweden ended in 1809, and by the Treaty of Frederikshamn Sweden ceded Finland to Russia.

By his orders the Russian general Buxhövden made arrangements for the attendance of a body of representatives at St Petersburg to consult as to the future form of govern-

ment. The Finns were on the alert, however, and pointed out that an irregularly chosen deputation, without defined powers, meeting in the Russian capital, while Russian troops were still engaged in war against the Swedes in Finland, was far from corresponding with the Diet at Åbo to which they had formerly been invited. Ultimately a deputation was sent to the Emperor to explain to him what could best be done for the benefit of the country.

The members of this deputation met on 12th November 1808 under the presidency of Baron Mannerheim. He reminded them that they were not properly constituted as a Diet, and therefore without power to pass laws or vote taxes. As spokesman the Baron pointed out to Alexander I. that the people of Finland were a free nation, subject to their own laws ; he thanked him for his gracious promise to respect these laws, liberties, and rights. At the same time a memorial was presented asking that a legally constituted Diet, " a general meeting of the Estates of the land," should be summoned in Finland. The Emperor signed a decree calling a Diet at Borgö, recognising it as the proper constitutional organ for deciding all matters concerning Finland. Baron Mannerheim, in writing about this critical moment, says : " The magnanimous philanthropist subsequently mentioned that he considered it an honour to rule over a free people with laws of its own."

The Finnish governor Sprengporten, and Alexander's trusted friend Count Speranski, who was appointed Secretary of State for Finland, arranged matters so that at last the Diet at Borgö was ready to start work. Anxious to do full justice to the people of Finland, Alexander had studied carefully the old Swedish laws which formed the basis of the Finnish constitution, thus showing that he fully realised the distinction between his position as autocrat of Russia and constitutional ruler of Finland.

Everything was settled ; the representatives of the four Estates were elected, and in 1809 the Emperor came in person to open this momentous Diet at Borgö.

It was a fortunate coincidence that a fortnight before the Diet met, even the Swedish subjects of King Gustavus IV.

had lost all patience with his incapacity and misgovernment and had shipped him off to Germany. Thus many loyal Finns, who had been reluctant to forswear their hereditary allegiance, now felt themselves free to cast in their lot with those who had made the arrangement with Russia.

At this first Diet at Borgö the Tsar was anxious to do all that lay in his power to reassure the Finns of his intention to do them full justice, and he had the "Act of Assurance," Finland's Magna Charta, read to the assembled Estates before the oath of allegiance was taken.

As if foreseeing the possibilities of future attacks on the constitution, Alexander I. made it a point to state again and again that he had promised to maintain the constitution and the fundamental laws of the Grand Duchy.

The official Swedish text of the Act of Assurance runs as follows :—

> "We, Alexander I. by the Grace of God Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias, Grand Duke of Finland, etc., etc., do make known that Providence having placed us in possession of the Grand Duchy of Finland, we have desired hereby to confirm and ratify the religion and the fundamental laws of the land as well as the privileges and rights which each Estate in the said Grand Duchy in particular and all the inhabitants in general, be their position high or low, have enjoyed hitherto according to the constitution. We promise to maintain all these benefits and laws firm and inviolable and in their full force. In confirmation whereof we have signed this Act of Assurance with our own hand. Given in Borgö, March 15th, 1809."

The opening of the Diet was a very brilliant function. By the kindly and straightforward manner with which Alexander accepted his position, he won all hearts, so that his journey through Finland was a veritable triumphal procession. When the Emperor had left Borgö the Diet set to work. Its task was to bring the country into conformity with the new order of things. The Diet had no power to propose new laws, but, in accordance with Swedish constitutional law, it was the ruler who had to lay certain propositions before the

Estates, which they had then to discuss and adapt to their needs ; only if there were a majority of three-fourths could these propositions become law, and in some cases they had even to be carried unanimously.

When the Diet had finished its work, the Emperor returned to Borgö to close the sitting, and in a speech which is one of the most plain-spoken of all his utterances, he repeatedly refers to Finland as " a nation governed by its own laws."

The Diet was supposed to meet every three years, and, although Alexander I. never called another, this neglect was no violation of the constitution, but was due to political difficulties in Russia.

Another important act on the part of the Tsar was the reuniting with Finland of the province of Viborg, which had many years previously under Peter I. come under Russian rule.

Before leaving the country the Tsar issued a manifesto in confirmation of all his promises and good wishes for his people of Finland. The Act of Assurance and this manifesto have, since 1809, kept their places side by side on the walls of every church in that land. When, after Sprengporten's death, Count Steinheil, a stranger to the country, was made the Governor, the Emperor had private instructions drawn up for his guidance in which he explained his own intentions with regard to Finland. " My object," he wrote, " in organising the situation in Finland has been to give the people a distinct or separate political existence, so that they shall not regard themselves as subject to Russia, but as attached to her by their own interests ; and for this reason not only their civil but also their political laws have been retained."

By the Treaty of Frederikshamn in 1809, Sweden definitely resigned all claims to Finland, and on her attempting to insert into the Act conditions for the future of that land the Russian Ambassador pointed out that the Tsar had of his own free will guaranteed to the Finns the exercise of their religion, rights, property, and privileges.

In 1816 the Senate, an institution peculiar to Finland, was created. It was to be both advisory and executive, its members to be chosen by the Emperor and to be responsible to him alone and not to the Diet.

The fundamental laws also extended to the military organisation of the Grand Duchy ; and although the Russian Minister of War several times wished to control Finnish army organisations, the Emperor, true to his oath, prevented it. Finnish soldiers could be placed under the command of Finnish officers only, and could serve only in their own country, and " nothing contrary to this law is to be done in this matter either now or in the future " (Alexander's own words at the Diet of Borgö).

A time of rest followed in which Finland was able to recuperate. During the ninety years which led to the fatal manifesto of 1898, Finland developed her material and intellectual resources, and raised herself to so high a standard of civilisation that she came to be on a par with the most progressive Western nations.

The death of Alexander I. created a difficult situation in Finland. Serious complications might have arisen had not the Finnish Secretary of State, Count Rehbinder, with rare prudence, tact, and firmness, succeeded in making the new Emperor, Nicholas I., sign the Act of Assurance on the very day of his accession to the throne. Only one sentence had to be changed : instead of " Providence having placed us in possession," it ran : " Having come by the will of Providence *into hereditary possession*, etc."

The reign of Nicholas I. opened with a military revolution in St Petersburg ; although no Finnish officer was implicated, the Grand Duchy had to suffer. Embittered at the very outset of his reign, the new Emperor determined to rule his Empire with a rod of iron ; yet so far as Finland was concerned, although he never called the Diet, he recognised and respected the constitutional rights of the country.

The Finns, always orderly and law-abiding, grasped the situation and, well accustomed to a long winter, patiently awaited the spring. Nor did they wait in vain. The reign of Alexander II. inaugurated an era of prosperity. This Emperor signed the Act of Assurance ungrudgingly. Indeed, he had already displayed considerable interest and sympathy for Finland in his capacity of Chancellor of the University of Helsingfors. In 1856 he visited Finland, where he took part

in the sitting of the Senate. He thanked the people for their assistance in the Crimean War, and expressed sympathy for the losses sustained by them during the bombardment of their coast by British ships.

Hitherto excellent Secretaries of State had ably represented their country in St Petersburg, but no Diet had as yet been summoned. The Finns anxiously awaited this moment. Might it possibly be his intention to rule without it ? His attempt to conciliate the Poles had failed and others had to suffer for it ; but at last, in 1863, a legally elected Diet was called which met for the first time since 1839. Alexander II., having spent part of the summer in Finland, accompanied by his sons and several ministers, opened the Diet in person.

A happy time followed, and from that period dates the extraordinary economic development of Finland. Internal difficulties were settled, railways and canals made ; large estates near Viborg, which had been owned by Russian magnates (given to them as rewards by former Tsars) were now bought up and sold to the peasants. The Diet was summoned every few years, and Finland lived in sympathy and harmony with her powerful neighbour Russia.

On the accession of Alexander III., in 1882, fears were aroused lest a reaction should set in, for the Slavophile press of Russia was urging a return to the blind absolutism of past generations ; but although this influenced the Emperor so far as Russia was concerned, he remained true to the principles of his fathers with regard to Finland. He not only signed the Act of Assurance, but sent a special order confirming all the new laws passed by the Diet.

Dark clouds were, however, gathering over the horizon. The reactionary party in Russia had ultimately succeeded in influencing the Emperor, who became a prey to the fears of terrorism. He surrendered himself more and more, as to his political views, into the hands of those officials who saw in repressive measures and absolutism the only cure for all ills. His advisers aimed at something more than merely obstructing the working of the Finnish Diet ; their object was to destroy it completely and to bring about a unification with Russia. The Grand Duchy of Finland was to be brought

down to the same level as the Russian provinces of the empire, to be administered from headquarters instead of by local autonomy as hitherto.

In 1890 a commission was appointed in St Petersburg to prepare plans for bringing the postage, coinage, and customs of Finland into line with those of the Empire: this was a direct violation of the constitution, as such matters were for the Finnish Senate and not for a Russian Committee to decide. A deputation from the four Estates went to St Petersburg to remonstrate, but it was not received. Later on the words "Province of Finland" were officially used instead of "Grand Duchy"—another breach of the Emperor's promises.

About this time some of the Senators began to realise that their position was a farce, and two of the most eminent men resigned. At the opening of the Diet in 1891 the Speakers of each Estate made a vigorous protest, and, although the Tsar's reply was conciliatory, these "unification tendencies" were not checked, and the great tragedy of the loss of Finland's liberty began.

In 1894, on his accession to the throne, the present Tsar, Nicholas II., like his predecessors, pledged himself to uphold the fundamental laws of Finland and steadfastly to maintain them in full force. These promises seemed a mockery, for they had already been deeply encroached upon by the former régime.

With the issue of a new manifesto to Finland in February 1898 the Emperor altered the military laws, and the clouds which had been gathering on the horizon broke at last. To the uninitiated it may seem as if Finland's attitude was wrong, and as if she objected to an army reform as such; but this was not the case. The Diet itself had proposed a change, and the protest was only raised against the unconstitutional proposals contained in the Bill. This military Bill, which was to be considered by an extraordinary Diet, was introduced in a threatening manner to the Estates by the Governor-General, a Russian soldier of the reactionary type. In former days, as far back as the reign of Alexander II., General Milyutin had formulated similar proposals, viz.: "That the

Finns must perform military service under the same conditions as did the men of all other parts of the Empire, and thus be merged in the Russian army." The Tsar, however, remembered the fundamental laws of Finland, and this proposal, as well as a later one made by the War Minister under Alexander III., came to naught, because, as he rightly remarked, " the Finnish army is a matter for the Finnish Diet."

The time chosen for crushing Finland's liberty over a question of armaments was unfortunate, for just then Nicholas II. was calling upon the other Powers to join in a peace conference at the Hague.

Apart from its essential defect, there was the unconstitutional way in which this manifesto was drawn up. There were also several illegal points in it, to mention one only—the oath. Till then the Finnish soldiers had sworn allegiance, like civil servants, to the " Monarch and Fatherland " ; but now the Russian form of oath was to be taken, not to the Grand Duke of Finland, but to the Autocrat of All the Russias. Until then every young man from eighteen to twenty-one years of age had had to present himself for military service ; but as only a very small number of recruits was required the ballot decided who was to serve and who not, and the length of time for service varied according to the standard of education. Everyone belonged for a certain term of years to the reserves, and after that to the " Landwehr." Finnish officers received their training in Finnish cadet corps ; but as only very few could get commissions in their own small army, the surplus accepted service in the Russian army, where they upheld the honour of the Finnish name, although they had then to become subjects to all Russian conditions as to language, etc., and from the military point of view they were reckoned as Russians. The new decree, however, decided that Finnish regiments were to be officered by Russians, who would not thereby become subject to Finnish conditions, but would bring their own language, customs, etc., with them, and would thus soon swamp the Finnish element.

The Diet offered to double the army—Russia demanded it to be quadrupled.

By this manifesto Nicholas II. undid the good work of his grandfather, Alexander II., under whom Finland had prospered. Just as strict adherence to solemn pledges had worked well, so did the reverse prove disastrous. This one ill-advised act has caused the decline of prosperity, and has given the signal for a steady, ever-increasing stream of emigration.

The Senate sent a memorial to the Emperor politely pointing out to him that his act was at variance with the fundamental statutes, but also that the loyal Finns were quite willing to make such concessions and sacrifices as were needed for the general welfare of the Empire, if only the matter were handed over to the Diet to be treated in the constitutional way. This deputation, however, was not received by the Tsar.

A formal deputation of the four Speakers went to St Petersburg, but neither were they admitted to the Tsar, who sent them a message that surely they ought to be content, as he had undertaken *personally* to decide every Finnish question. This rebuff was disheartening ; the Finnish people saw their self-government menaced and autocracy inaugurated, and once more Senate and Diet protested—but all in vain. Deep emotion and anxiety prevailed in the nation, and suddenly, quite independently of all political parties or leaders, the idea sprang up of a personal appeal direct from the heart of the nation to their Grand Duke, the Tsar.

There was no organisation in existence through which to collect signatures. It was the depth of winter, and the people lived scattered over miles of country. Although towns could be got at by rail, hundreds of remote villages and islands out in frozen sea could only be reached by sledges or on snow-shoes. The Russian secret police had already begun its work, so that the Post Office could not be trusted, but volunteers came forward, one hundred of whom were chosen. Five hundred copies of that appeal written by hand, one for each parish in Finland, were entrusted to these volunteers, the idea being that they should be read and signed in every church on Sunday, March 5th. There were wonderful instances of devotion ; as much as a hundred miles were

run by one man on snow-shoes in a day and a half ; and in ten days five hundred thousand signatures had been affixed and delegates appointed from each parish to proceed to St Petersburg.

This latter had not been part of the original scheme, and might have proved a risk, as the police of St Petersburg do not encourage demonstrations. A special train was chartered, and before General Bobrikov and the police had any idea of what had been done the five hundred men were on their way to the Russian capital. They were not received by the Tsar, while a small counter-petition, quickly produced by Bobrikov and signed by his creatures, was graciously accepted. The monster petition to the Tsar had no other effect than to draw down a threat of further drastic measures, and finally Bobrikov got the longed-for power to exile and deport to remote regions inconvenient individuals. And so it came about that Finland's best sons received orders of expulsion, which meant that within a certain number of days they had to leave their home and country.

The petition of a whole nation was merely a humble and heartfelt plea for the maintenance of the justice of past years, yet the reply was crushing in its unsympathetic severity. It was then that the member for Viborg, who was also British consul, made an epoch-making speech in which he said amongst other things : " We Finns are accustomed to the ravages of frost, and have patiently borne that visitation, trusting in the future ; but such a night of frost as the manifesto of February 15th has never been known before by the Finnish nation. With one stroke of the pen our most cherished possessions have been taken from us, none are untouched by it—rich and poor alike have been stricken. Ask his Majesty whether he can afford to throw away the devotion and love of the whole nation ? "

It was hoped that this speech might reach the ear of the Tsar, and it may have done so eventually, as it was printed and widely distributed, but the brave consul had to suffer for it. The British Government was informed that he had taken part in political propaganda, with the result that he was deprived of his office.

The careful and deliberate mode of action adopted by the Diet was a little embarrassing to the Russian officials, who had looked upon the abolition of the constitution as an easy matter. They had anticipated an outbreak of violence, and were prepared to take repressive measures, and the firm determination of the whole Finnish people to maintain their rights while at the same time abiding within the bounds of strict order and legality was a puzzle to them. Though a few Russian *agents provocateurs* were introduced to create disturbances, they did not succeed ; and when the Governor-General questioned the chief of the police of Helsingfors as to how many men he could rely upon to maintain order, the answer was, " Seventy thousand."

At that period the Russian papers were full of denunciation of the English, of Jewish bankers, and of Freemasons—three Russian bugbears, who were supposed to have stirred up this conspiracy in " the Russian provinces of Finland."

Threats were made to Finland, and also fully carried out. The Diet was closed with a curt message from the Tsar, and in spite of the rejection of the Bill the military reorganisation was enforced. Finnish youths were drafted into Russian regiments all over the vast Empire, instead of, as hitherto, only in their own country.

The introduction of the new military law met with persistent opposition : in the majority of cases the clergy who were to read the edict in the churches refused to do so ; recruits failed to present themselves, and even those men who had to see to the enforcement of the order refused to elect members for such work. All this led to a deadlock, and then General Bobrikov tried by means of bribes and promises to coax the young men to come forward, but without avail ; until at last he threatened to have the Diet postponed if the right number of recruits did not turn up, whereupon they presented themselves in order to save the Diet. The Governor, however, did not keep his side of the bargain.

The result was emigration by the thousand. America gained what Finland lost—splendid sailors and good workers. The counsellors of the Tsar told him that a bad harvest had

caused this exodus, but they were mistaken. Official statements mention 12,103 emigrants in 1899 ; in 1901 the number rose to 22,263.

The Governor-General asked for repressive powers, and poor Finland soon found herself in the throes of a tragedy ; the first men to suffer were the best, the most eminent, and the most patriotic. New irregularities were constantly perpetrated : the Finnish postage stamp was abolished, and espionage, *agents provocateurs*, and Russian gendarmes were introduced ; the ancient right to form associations and to hold meetings was restricted, and a number of petty measures were introduced showing ignorance and contempt for Finnish customs. Though complaints about these were sent up to the Tsar, his only reply was to increase the arbitrary power of the Governor-General.

A new manifesto was issued which made Russian the official language, but, before its promulgation, fourteen out of a total of twenty Senators sent in their resignation. The Secretary of State for Finland at that time was von Plehve, and to him the Diet sent a letter pointing out that Swedish and Finnish were not merely local languages subordinate to an Imperial one, but the national languages of Finland, and therefore they alone could, in the fullest sense of the word, be the official languages of the Grand Duchy.

Great practical difficulties arose out of this language manifesto. Only a few Finnish officials knew Russian, and even they refused to use it for " illegal purposes," so that General Bobrikov found himself in a very awkward position. More and more the Finns realised how entirely they had been handed over to the arbitrary power of this Governor, who, on the resignation of the fourteen Senators, tried to fill the vacancies with men subservient to his will. Post after post became vacant, and, as no loyal Finn wished to accept office, Bobrikov gradually filled them with his creatures, some of whom were men who, according to Finnish law, had lost their civil rights. At last even these men found the situation impossible, and a dictatorship was introduced.

One of the uses which Bobrikov made of his unlimited power was to dismiss the judges who refused to comply with

his illegal demands, and thus an important safeguard of Finnish society was removed.

Ignorant both of Swedish and Finnish, this Governor-General was a soldier whose attitude towards the people he governed was one of blank amazement ; he could not fathom a mentality which dared to question the absolute wisdom of the Autocrat of All the Russias. He was forced to admit the general discontent ; but he boldly proclaimed that the strained situation was due to the machinations of a few evil-minded persons—that the whole nation was writhing in despair he refused to acknowledge.

The Russian press put forward his point of view, but those who followed events with understanding knew that in reality it was merely the result of a deep-rooted conviction and fear lest Finland's cherished liberties—even national existence—should be lost.

The course which was so widely adopted in Finland during this period of oppression has been described as " passive resistance on a basis of strict legality " ; it implies obedience to statute laws, but refusal to acknowledge illegal measures.

Every branch of civic life was tampered with, even the Post Office being used as a means of spying. The Postmaster-General pointed out to Plehve the grave consequences of these acts, and also that they were an infringement of the Universal Postal Convention. The Senate raised a protest against the Government circular concerning this breach of the law, yet without result. The Postmaster-General, an honest man, resigned, and for a time nobody was found willing to take his place.

As the highest officials had been dismissed, and Russians, ignorant of language and people, had been appointed in their place, everything was bound to go wrong. A characteristic example of how things were managed is that, after the dismissal of the Inspector of Fisheries, Bobrikov's young Russian adjutant was appointed to the post—as " he was interested in fishing " !

In November 1903 a deputation of exiles arrived in Darmstadt to see the Tsar and to present a petition, but did not succeed in doing so. This document was a lucid

statement of facts. Amongst other things it mentioned the apparent increase in crime, although convictions had decreased and the police force had been strengthened beyond all reason, their chief occupation being to spy on all honest citizens and to make raids on their homes.

The unhappy country was suddenly startled by the news that the dictator Bobrikov had been shot. That a clerk of the Senate, a man of upright character, the son of a Finnish general who had served all his life in Russian regiments, should commit such an act proved to what straits Finland had been brought. Assassination was a new phenomenon in that land ! It was the result of Russian administration.

Prince Obolenski, the successor of Bobrikov, followed in the latter's footsteps, although with more moderation. In August 1904 the Diet was summoned ; but as, by Finnish law, every man elected has to present himself, the question arose, what should be done in the case of the numerous exiles who during three years of repression had been forced to leave the country ? Prince Obolenski wisely permitted all exiles who were representative members of the nobility, or men elected to represent the other Estates, to return for the session. One important result of this Diet was the resuscitation of the national spirit from depression ; it led to a consolidation of the nation, and all former party strife was forgotten in face of the national danger.

The Diet set to work and sent a " Petition of Rights " to the Emperor. It was a unanimous action of the Four Estates, pleading for the restoration of legal order ; but once again no reply was vouchsafed. Quite unexpectedly Nicholas II. closed the Session, although asked to let it be only adjourned, and upon his refusal to do so great disappointment prevailed.

The Diet was to meet again in a year's time in order to settle the question of the provisional payment of ten million marks a year to the Russian exchequer—this as a compromise until such time as the military question could be settled in a constitutional manner.

In 1905 an event of unparalleled importance took place. Spontaneously and simultaneously a general strike broke out all over the country. Everyone, without distinction of social

position, age, or sex, stopped work and marched in procession along the streets. This gigantic crowd of unarmed citizens appeared uplifted into a state of almost religious exaltation. All former differences and distinctions were put aside, the whole nation becoming as one family, and perfect strangers spoke to one another as naturally as old friends. This mystic feeling of unity spread even to the children. It had been a common occurrence for Finnish and Russian boys to fight each other, but now the Finnish children, marching in procession past the Russian schools, invited their former antagonists to join them, saying : " Come, we are all brothers." Thousands of children thus paraded the streets singing the Marseillaise in Finnish, Swedish, and Russian.

The Governor-General called upon the Russian military to disperse the crowds that were gathering on every open space, but the soldiers refused to fire on unarmed people ; some even, expressing sympathy with the Finns, fraternised with them. It was a unique phenomen, this strike on the part of a whole nation, combined as it was with a complete " non-resistance " to violence, and readiness to die for their cause.

A significant statement in regard to the attitude of the people is contained in paragraph 3 of the proclamation issued in Tammerfors, the most important manufacturing city of the Grand Duchy : " We honour and love Russia's noble people as much as we hate the bureaucracy which during the last few years has represented Russia. We have no desire whatever to separate ourselves from the great Russian Empire, but we do ask for the assurance that only the best Russian element should bear rule over us."

A mass meeting was held, and a deputation presented to the Governor-General the constitutional demands of the people. This had the desired effect, for the Governor-General, Prince Obolenski, and the members of the Senate resigned in a body. When this fact was proclaimed to the people great enthusiasm reigned, and thousands of voices were raised in the Finnish National Anthem. It was an historic moment.

Thus, after a duration of only six days, the general strike came to an end, the day having been won. The Emperor issued a manifesto in which he abrogated all unconstitutional

measures introduced since 1899, and restored to Finland all she had lost. Thus the dark clouds were lifting.

The Diet had a heavy task before it: numerous urgent reforms, left in abeyance during the period in which its very existence had been threatened, had now to be carried out. Universal suffrage was introduced, and women became eligible for a seat in the Diet, and have since proved themselves useful members of the legislative body.

The bright hopes for the future, however, were not to be fulfilled; gradually all the former illegalities were reintroduced by the Russian authorities, abuses crept in again, and many new ones added.

The history of contemporary Finland is well known in England, and the attitude of "non-resistance" to the superior powers of the Russian Government—as represented by the Governor-General—has the fullest sympathy and admiration of all lovers of constitutional government. The Finnish magistrates who are to-day serving terms of imprisonment in Russian prisons are doing so not for breaking, but for refusing to break, the laws of Finland.

The great grievance of the Finnish people is that, although they are perfectly willing to accept measures suggested by the Tsar as Grand Duke of Finland, they have no guarantee that these measures will be passed in a constitutional manner —in simple accordance with the Finnish laws sworn to by the ruler on his accession.

The Finns have been a loyal people, and even to-day it would not be too late for the Tsar to regain their trust and devotion if only he would return to the wise and generous policy of his ancestors. Russia has nothing to fear from a contented Finland—the history of the nineteenth century has proved this. To-day, when national feeling is awakening in every nation however small, it seems hardly the moment to deny to so highly civilised and progressive a nation as the Finnish (in which there are no illiterates) the right to their old well-proved laws and privileges. Surely it would be better for Russia to have a contented nation as buffer State between herself and Sweden than one smarting silently and sullenly under injustice.

After the war broke out and the German Government prevented the Empress-Dowager from returning to Russia *via* Berlin, her Majesty passed through Finland on her way to Petrograd. True to her traditional liking for Finland, the Empress showed herself to the people as she had done in the days gone by, when with her late husband the Emperor Alexander III. she had spent many happy days in that country. Her gracious manner, her demand to hear the National Anthem, which had been forbidden for years, and her command to have only Finnish and not Russian police to accompany her, aroused popular enthusiasm.

The latent loyalty of the Finns awoke, and crowds volunteered for service in the Russian army. A gracious telegram sent by the Tsar to thank the Finnish people for its manifestation of loyalty raised great hopes that a new era had begun ; but up to the present not one of the restrictions and illegal measures has been removed—in fact, matters have grown worse. The press is muzzled, many of the best citizens have been exiled to Siberia by administrative order—*i.e.* without trial. Many others have simply vanished —only the Russian police knows their whereabouts.

When the manifesto promising autonomy to Poland was issued, the people of Finland hoped that for them too the day of restoration was dawning ; but in this they were disappointed.

Those who love Finland and who know how terribly dark the hour is through which that land is passing, ask with heavy hearts : " Watchman—what of the night ? "

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